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74 JAN/FEB 2004

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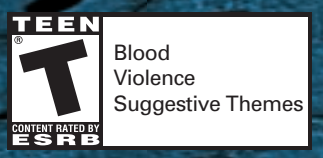
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# 74 CONTENTS

JAN/FEB 2004

- Editor's Rant 8 /
- Staff Box 10 /
- Contributors 12 /
- Letters/Contest/Bitter Bastard 14 /
- Prefix 16-30 /
- Michael Mayer 16 /
- Koma & Bones 18 /
- Daedelus 20 /
- Michel Gondry 21 /
- MC Tali 22 /
- Cappo 25 /
- 2Mex 26 /
- Elephant Man 32 /**
- Ce'cile 36 /
- Dancehall Rebels 40 /
- Dancehall Legends 44 /
- MF Doom 48 /
- Disco D 50 /
- Ricardo Villalobos 52 /
- Stockholm City Guide 54 /
- Video Directors 56 /
- Reviews: Albums 63 /
- Reviews: Compilations 71 /
- Reviews: Singles 74 /
- Reviews: Lucky 13 82 /
- In the Studio: AGF 84 /
- Machines: Components 85 /
- Machines: NAMM Preview 88 /
- Vis-Ed: Tiffany Bozic 92 /
- TBC: Bakari Kitwana 96 /

BLINDIN' YOU WITH BLING: ELEPHANT MAN  
IMAGE CHRISTOPHER WOODCOCK



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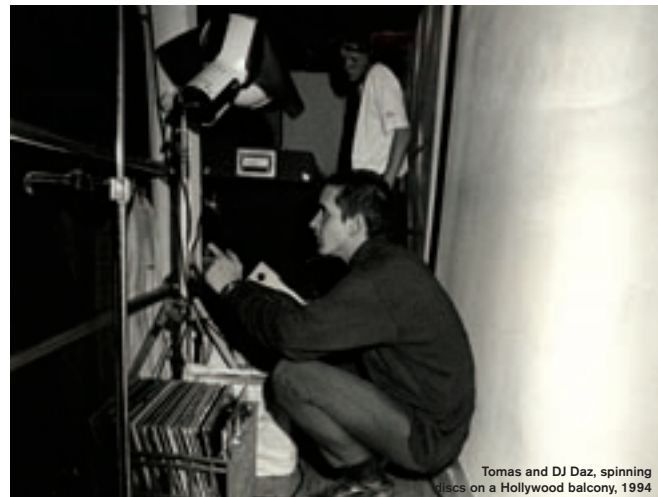
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## ED'S RANT



Tomas and DJ Daz, spinning records on a Hollywood balcony, 1994

### REVOLUTION AND TING

It happened in 1984, around the time when Ronald Reagan uttered the now-famous gaffe—"My fellow Americans, I'm pleased to tell you today that I've signed legislation that will outlaw Russia forever. We begin bombing in five minutes" (<http://www.othertimelines.com/viewtimeline.php?timelined=385>)—on his weekly radio broadcast. I realized I had caught the reggae bug bad. I'd spent my early high school years trying punk, mod and ska bands on for size as tightly as a vintage Italian three-button suit. In the end, Vespas were too expensive a style accessory, the Two-Tone movement had careened to a close, and I was looking for music that had the politics of punk but suited the mystical green foothills of Northern California. Reggae was that soundtrack, and luckily it was about to reach critical mass in the Bay Area.

From '84 forward, not a day went by without being able to access reggae via a radio show (often two a night) on local alternative and college stations. There were concerts in outdoor amphitheaters and sound system dances in rented halls and outdoor courtyards. I began sneaking into over-21 dancehall clubs in San Francisco and spending any tips from my part-time gelato shop job on those Jamaican and British reggae 12" singles called "discoplates." It was a time of Wackies label 10" extended dub mixes, DJs like Charlie Chaplain and Brigadier Jerry rising to fame on the mic, and Black Uhuru winning the first reggae Grammy. Five years after Bob Marley's death from cancer in 1981, the rub-a-dub dancehall of Michigan & Smiley, Eek-A-Mouse, Yellowman and Early B overtook the post-Marley roots reggae remnants.

After my college years in Los Angeles, the early '90s saw dancehall reach a higher level, as labels like Atlantic and Sony signed up roughneck DJs and singers alike. Hardcore toasters Shabba Ranks, Patra, Tiger and Supercat were launched into crossover success via the burgeoning hip-hop market. Dancehall went mainstream for the first time with Shaggy, and promptly fizzled out. Labels realized that there were no million-sellers on their rosters, patois chat was still indecipherable to American ears and damn if the radio didn't ignore dancehall big-time.

Which is why Sean Paul's 2003 double platinum selling album *Dutty Rock* is such a watershed moment for dancehall. A music that had taken two steps forward (in the American and global markets) then one step back is now sprinting toward the finish line of pop legitimacy. This might not seem such a big deal to our French, German and British readers—they've had pure reggae and reggae hybrids in their charts for decades now. For Americans, however, this could be another revolution.

When viewed in terms of the United States' socio-political evolution, dancehall's new-found acceptance can be seen as evidence of the nation embracing and fueling global music culture as never before, thereby giving merit to another triumph of the black diaspora. America's flirtations with Latin pop a few years ago likewise signaled changing times: listeners wanted music that reflected long-ignored major ethnic communities and catered to their tastes. With the complete cultural and social dominance of the late '90s and early new century's hip-hop generation, dancehall's mass popularity was only a matter of time.

The best part now is that as dancehall has matured and globalized, it's also fused with any number of subgenres of electronic music, from drum & bass (see the Congo Natty label) to broken beat (artists like Stereotyp and Dego) to house (check Groove Armada's "Superstylin"). As dancehall music transitioned from being created by great rub-a-dub studio bands such as the Roots Radics to being made with Casio keyboards and samplers in the mid-to-late-'80s, it joined the pantheon of emerging electronic dance music that spans from Detroit to Berlin to Tokyo, from Kraftwerk to Yellow Magic Orchestra to Derrick May.

*XL88R* has always maintained that dancehall, dub or any other form of music made with electronic gear should be considered on equal terms with the rest of house and techno's offshoots. As such, we're proud to celebrate the Jamaican sound in this issue. You got a problem with that? Blame Ronald Reagan.

—Tomas

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### MARYSE LARIVIERE

Maryse Larivière is based in Montreal. She specializes in capturing some of the most provocative names in modern music at their most intensely personal, and her photographs have appeared in numerous international publications. Her personal work is self-referential and addresses being caught between her obsessive passions for the lost and unobtainable love object and the art world.



### CAMERON MACDONALD

Behavioral science might explain why Cameron Macdonald desired an *XLR8R* internship. An exposure to a college roommate's looped playlist of trance and gabber techno six hours a day for 17 months straight must amount to something. During his recovery, this patient contributed to *Punk Planet*, *Sacramento News & Review*, *The Wire*, *Clamor*, *The Natomas Journal* and *Grooves*.



### SPEED DEMON

With a fierce appetite and an experienced palate, Speed Demon keeps busy. He writes for *XLR8R* and *Big Shot* magazines, as well as for numerous artists and record labels, produces tracks in his home studio (having graduated from the sax), and works full-time as a network technician, while keeping his girlfriend smiling and himself sane.



### MELISSA WHEELER

Montreal-based journalist Melissa Wheeler recently found her first grade report card. Among other comments, her teacher had written, "Melissa likes to write and publish her own stories." Damn. Apparently, she's been writing for a good 17 years now, and has no immediate plans to stop. When she's not writing you can usually find her painting, hustling freelance radio pieces, or bustin' up the dance floor in high heels and leg warmers.

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## LETTERS

All letters printed "as is."



## SUGGESTIVE REMARKS

Do you think the *URB* editors just go through stacks of other magazines and bite everything in harm's way? This month's *URB* has a story on girl-fights, and an in-studio with Richard Devine. Where do you think they could they have gotten

those ideas from?

And, oh yeah...glad you covered circuit bending, but I wish you could have gone into greater detail. Why not include a simple circuit-bending project we could all do at home with Radio Shack stuff? In general, I think you guys should go deeper into everything you write about. We want in-depth stories with details! *Wax Poetics* and *Relax* (Japan) are good examples of the kind of writing I'm talking about (even though *Relax* is all in Japanese).

More history too! Old classic records, old gear, in-depth tricks! (How 'bout In The Studios with Spinna, JayDee, Madlib, Hrvatski, Edan, Jel, Prefuse, Matmos, Matthew Herbert, Marumari, etc., etc.) or top 20 all-time favorite records lists from guys like these?

Sebastian Botzow

## Tomas responds:

The truth is all magazines borrow, sample and remix elements of each other all the time, same as any other art form. I don't see what *URB* is doing as any different. Thanks for the many on-point suggestions—we take them to heart, trust me. We've attempted to do an In The Studio with Jay Dee—he's a hard cat to get to. Matmos, Madlib and Prefuse we've covered recently (issues 73 and 69 respectively) and Jel and Edan are high on our list of next culprits to corner.

## LITTLE LORD FONT-LEROY

Dear Bitter Bastard,  
With regards to "10 fonts that are absolute crap" (Bitter Bastard, #73), this one is pony too: Comic Sans MS. The type of font for people who use adjectives such as "crazy," "zany," "mad," or "wacky" when describing them-

selves to people they've just met in the pub or when on a teambuilding exercise from work. A font for twats.

*Rockin' in the free world,*  
Steve Jones

## Bitter Bastard responds:

Yeah, we thought Comic Sans was a twatty font too, but it lost out to Sand, which made us go overboard in a fit of rage. Thanks for refueling the fire.

## SHORT CIRCUITED

Thank you for your recent article on Circuit Bending ("Accidentally Famous," issue #72) and for making Chachi Jones its newest poster boy. It seems that making the cover of *XLR8R* stroked his ego enough to inspire him to cash in on his fifteen minutes by snapping up every vintage Texas Instruments learning toy he can find on eBay and reselling them.

Slapping a few switches, buttons and knobs on a Speak & Math and putting them up for auction may be his prerogative, and I don't have a problem with that. To date Chachi hasn't made any circuit-bent toy available for sale that doesn't have completely detailed bending instructions available for download from various locations on the Internet.

If your readers really want a circuit-bent Speak & \_\_\_\_ (which, quite honestly, is the experimental electronic equivalent of playing a G-A-D progression on the guitar—it's become standard, almost trite), they would be better off taking the time to learn the art of circuit bending themselves. It doesn't require a degree in electrical engineering—anyone can learn it, and it's nowhere near as complex as certain cover boys would like the public (especially the members of the public that have lots of money) to think. They could donate what they save in the process to charity. Or they could use it to buy more adventurous toys (like the Casio SK-1, the earlier models in the Yamaha DD series, etc.) to bend. That is, if they can outbid "chachijones."

Anonymous via email

## Tomas responds:

Fancy trying out for Bitter Bastard's job?

## CORRECTIONS

In our review of singles by The Nudge and Dual Control, we mistakenly said that the Grand Central label is based in London. It is based in Manchester. In issue 73, we listed the artist who painted at our NYC 10-Year event as Keith Jacobs. His name is Rich Jacobs.

## BITTER BASTARD

## BITTER BASTARD'S GUIDE TO CELEBRITY COUPLES OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC

BJ "Bitter" Bastard never turns down an opportunity to make computer-related sex jokes or snarky scat comments, so when people in the electronic music and indie hip-hop world started shacking up like penguins in heat, it became the perfect timing for a few ill jabs. Here are BJ's Top 10 favorite celebrity couples—both real and rumored—of the underground.

## AGF &amp; Vladislav Delay

Sample conversation at their Berlin squat: "Oh baby, I want you to load your Max MSP onto my hard drive." "Not now, honey. I'm writing a glitch techno opera about my Elektra complex."

## Venetian Snares &amp; Hecate

Remember in high school when you couldn't get laid but all the horny nerds who were into Ren Faire and *Dungeons & Dragons* were getting poontang on the regular? Venetian Snares and Hecate are those nerds. See their *Nymphomatriarch* album for the sounds of two lubed-up butts squelching.

## Drew Daniel &amp; Martin Schmidt

How rad is it that Martin met Drew when he was go-go dancing in a gay club with a fish over his dick?

## Matthew Herbert &amp; Dani Siciliano

Dani always gets mad at Matt for buying every new Cuisinart and blender that comes out just because he likes the noises they make.

## Apparat &amp; Ellen Allien

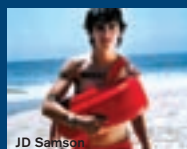
There are so many jokes here regarding shit being katapulted, cock rings, aliens, and apparatuses that we don't really know where to begin, actually.

## Fabio &amp; Grooverider

Fabio's been trying for years to get the ruff Rider to stop wearing his lace-up leather vest with no shirt underneath, to no avail.

## JD Samson &amp; Wynne Greenwood

Imagine what it's like when these ladies (from Le Tigre and Tracy & The Plastics, respectively) bump femmestaches. We bet Glenn Frey's "The Heat is On" starts playing.



JD Samson

## Swingsett &amp; Lisa Shaw

They make sweet naked music on his swingsett. Sorry, that's the best we could come up with.

## Lyrics Born &amp; Joyo

Does she call him Lyrics or Born in bed? And can you imagine how hard it is to say "Joyo, joyo, joyo" all fast while you're doing it?

## Sven Väth, Richie Hawtin &amp; Ricardo Villalobos

We found this snapshot of their coming out party in Ibeeetha. Nuff said.



## XLR8R'S GET DIGITAL CONTEST



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# PREFIX

AUDIOFILE:  
MICHAEL MAYER

## THE MUSINGS OF KOMPAKT'S MAD SCIENTIST.

"Maybe in the US you have a different impression of how things work in Cologne, but people party really hard here," says Michael Mayer, laughing over the phone lines one night after closing up shop. "When I play abroad, I'm often told, 'Hey, I didn't expect to hear such a rocking set—I expected some guy wearing glasses, a scientist!'"

It's true that Cologne's techno scene is often assumed to be a stern, steadfastly Spartan entity, home to a kind of pared-down geek-house. But Mayer *is* a scientist of sorts. As co-director of Kompakt, alongside Jürgen Paape and Wolfgang Voigt, Mayer has engineered the sound of techno today. In contrast to sectarian purism (whether it be the Detroit, UK or Scandinavian variety), Mayer has spent his career conducting experiments that prove techno's vitally hybrid character. Under his watch, Kompakt—which is not only a wildly prolific label, but also a distributor, booking agency and record shop—has shown that techno can accommodate not only functionalist brutalism and minimalist subtlety but also neo-Romantic pop, pulsing ambiance, kitschy beer-hall *schlager*, and even the off-kilter triplet form called *schaffel* (meaning "shuffle").

Kompakt's diversity, as overseen by Mayer, shouldn't surprise: Mayer's own mix sets, live and recorded, are known for reaching far and wide. While earlier mixes like *Michael Mayer Presentiert Kompakt Köln* stayed within the lofty-softy bounds that characterized minimal techno in the late '90s, recent stunts (like throwing the White Stripes' "Seven Nation Army" into the middle of storming 4/4 sets) have shown him to be an audacious selector with Catholic tastes.

"It blew me away the first time I heard somebody mixing two records together," says Mayer, who began DJing in the 1980s in his home town of Offenburgh. "Back in the '80s, I'd play any kind of dance music available: Italo-disco, remixes, extended versions of Depeche Mode, the Pet Shop Boys, disco classics." While Germany's rave boom shifted his focus to techno, his more universal pop sensibilities have stayed with him, which might explain his recent *schaffel* update of Sade's "Love Is Stronger than Pride" for Kompakt's Speicher series, which represents some of the label's strongest offerings to date.

"Kompakt was still regarded as an ambient, minimal label," says Mayer of Speicher's creation. "We felt it was time for a sledgehammer. We thought, 'We love to party, we love hard techno, and yet at the same time, too many records bored us to death. So the idea was to offer two fat tracks—two A-sides—explaining how we understand techno.'"

It's the perfect example of Kompakt's laboratory approach. And, as it turns out, Mayer doesn't run from the white-coat characterization. "We do see ourselves as scientists—but more drunken scientists," he jokes. "We love to have fun, and that's the mandatory thing about everything we do. We have to bring the joy to the people." }

Fabric Live 13: Michael Mayer is out now. [www.fabriclondon.com](http://www.fabriclondon.com). For more on Kompakt check: [www.kompakt-net.de](http://www.kompakt-net.de)





**A NORTHERN TRIO BRINGS BEAUTY TO BRITISH BREAKS.**

From the Doves' "Lost Souls" to the Music's "Getaway," Northern English rock bands have a way of making their home sound like hell on earth. But where his rockist contemporaries are obsessed with escaping their native soil, breakbeat producer Chris Kirkbride (a.k.a. Bones) insists that he's a resolutely Northern soul—no matter how dismal his surroundings.

"Things are tougher up here," claims the native of Lancaster, a city located 60 miles north of Manchester. "We don't have as much money as in the South and it rains a lot more, so I suppose people are yearning for better things. But whenever I get away, I'm always dying to get back to the North."

Given his first-hand experience in the late-'80s Madchester scene (which fostered groups like Happy Mondays, Stone Roses and Primal Scream), the Englishman can attest to Northwest England's proud dance music his-

tory. Alongside fellow DJ Andy Duckmanton (a.k.a. Koma) and studio engineer Jude Sebastian (aka Proteus), Bones fashions breakbeat tracks in the genre-defying tradition of his regional predecessors.

"When Madchester first started," he recalls, "we'd be going out to clubs that started out playing hip-hop and by the end of the night, it'd be acid house. All styles got accepted under one roof—it'd be nice if that could happen again."

With their new LP on Rennie Pilgrem's Thursday Club Recordings, *Shutterspeed*, Koma & Bones go to some lengths to make that dream come true, ably dissecting deep house on the anthem "Take Me Back" (which features a disembodied vocal from Chi-Town don Robert Owens) and indulging their b-boy beginnings on the pop-locking "Flip Flop." For all its freeform flair, *Shutterspeed* finds the Lancaster lads laying out enough slippery rollers (like "Slalom" and "Donkey Spanner") to keep even the fiercest breaks fiend happy.

Bones traces the trio's roots back to 1996, when K&B sent a demo to TCR. Impressed with the group's knack for sound design, TCR's Danny McMillan phoned the boys up and offered some songwriting pointers, leading them to compose "Powercut," their dynamic first single. As co-head of the new Burrito label, Bones insists that he's always giving feedback to fledgling beatmakers—whether they like it or not.

"It's never a case of saying to someone, 'Your demo was shit!'" says the affable Brit. "It's a case of giving constructive criticism, telling them what they might do to improve. Some people don't like taking it, but those are the ones who won't end up going anywhere with their music. If you're going to be in this business, you've got to take the bad with the good." ]

*Shutterspeed is out now on Thursday Club Recordings. www.tcr.uk.com*

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**NAKED EYE**

Several months ago, a tiny book of Japanese soft porn landed on my desk. Tender young things were draped over bathtubs, crouching on rooftops and slouching in corners in various stage of glorious

nakedness. Never before have so many people tried to steal a book from me. "The girls I selected for this book are perfectly cute for everyone," explains photographer **Yasumasa Yonehara** of the appeal of the aforementioned quarterly, *Snapping Everywhere*. "They're those ordinary girls walking on the street, fashion models, TV stars, or porno stars who are popular among young boys. The most important thing when I cast a model is that she is accepted by her own generation, both boys and girls, and she must be real. In Japan, the girls tend to be forced to exist in boys' imaginations. I always try to find a girl who has her own identity."

When he's not getting the rocks off of tastemakers everywhere, 44-year-old Yonehara is a busy man. He's half of the **Thunderbirds** art agency, which works with artists like Parra, Delta and Bad BC crew. He also produces *ShampooTime*, a fashion magazine featuring shots of girls on the street, and *Petstyle*, which chronicles the current pet boom in Japan. Additionally, he's published *Lip* and the *New Love* book, which features the painful faces of porn stars.

Yonehara may seem like he just has sex on the brain, but he says his female-focused work is a lot more than workaday smut. "In Japan, [people think] the majority opinion is right," he says. "[The attitude is] 'I say yes because everybody says yes. I hate that and I want to change that situation somehow. I think eroticism is the fastest and most effective weapon to revolutionize that kind of society.'" *Tyra Bangs*



**MICHEL GONDRY**

**THE BOY WHO NEVER GREW UP BESTOWS VISUAL MAGIC ON YOUR FAVORITE MUSIC.**

French director Michel Gondry is responsible for making some of your favorite songs come alive. Björk, Daft Punk, the White Stripes—all have been touched by his video magic. Gondry's new autobiographical DVD—part of Palm Pictures' Director's Series—compiles over 30 of his music videos and short films, penetrating deep into his oddball imagination. More importantly, it answers the eternal question: "Who comes up with this stuff?" This spring, Gondry releases his second feature film, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, starring Jim Carrey and Kirsten Dunst.

**XLR8R: Childhood plays a major role in your body of work.**

**Michel Gondry:** Childhood occupies the biggest part of your brain, so a lot of my memories subconsciously (and consciously) enter the videos I do. I played with Legos all the time as a kid, and that obviously has a connection with ["Fell in Love With a Girl"] the White Stripes video I made. I've definitely stayed in the same frame of mind since I was young.

**XLR8R: Do you think you'll ever grow up?**

**MG:** I hope so, otherwise I don't think I'll be able to work with Björk again. [*Laughs*] She wants to move her videos beyond the childish themes, as she said in the DVD. I'm lucky to make a living off my sickness.

**XLR8R: Many people argue that the film version of a book ruins the author's original vision. Do you feel the same way about turning a song into a music video?**

**MG:** I have a little complex about that obviously, in the sense that I feel some directors' imaginations kill the song. If I destroy a song with my video, at least it's done in a creative way.

**XLR8R: Does your background as a drummer make it easier for you to make videos?**

**MG:** Yes, in the sense that I have a stronger connection with the musician. We're definitely on the same level when making the video. A lot of videos I see try to make the band look so heroic, and I resent that. It's the same reason why I detest fashion: its message is so condescending to the average person. They want to make people feel like shit so they can succeed.

**XLR8R: Many film directors who began working as video directors receive a lot of criticism for being cartoonish or sophomoric. Why do you think that is?**

**MG:** I think that's due to people who like to simplify things. You also have to understand that a lot of feature filmmakers are cartoonish and sophomoric. They just show a bunch of big boobs without really telling a story.

**XLR8R: Do you ever worry that you're going to run out of ideas?**

**MG:** I had this fear when I finished "Human Behavior" [for Björk]. I was a little depressed at the time and I thought I wouldn't have any more fresh ideas. But later on I did two of my favorite videos back to back in the same month—that was the White Stripes with the Lego blocks, and "Star Guitar" by the Chemical Brothers. That made me feel a lot better.

The Work of Director Michel Gondry is out now on Palm Pictures DVD. [www.directorslabel.com](http://www.directorslabel.com), [www.lacunainc.com](http://www.lacunainc.com)

**Avant-garde composer, musician and experimental turntablist Daedelus** (born Alfred Weisberg-Roberts) is a master of subtle evocations of dramatic scenery from romantic eras past. The LA-based producer's latest album, *Of Snowdonia* (Plug Research), is an engaging assortment of moody, musical reflections on the country of Wales and the desolate region surrounding its famed Snowdon Mountain.

Transporting himself to different times and places is not just a musical thing for Daedelus, it's also a fashion statement. When he's not in the studio, the eccentric composer spends his time obsessing over the Victorian era, relishing such relevant texts as the writings of socialites Beau Brummel and Leon Vincent, and even dabbling in the art of "dressing Vicky." *Quentin Haskins*

**DAEDELUS ON DRESSING VICKY**

"It's great, because the Victorian era was the one time in history when fashion was more focused on men than women. Women also had interesting clothing, but for whatever reason, men were suddenly the peacocks of the age. The dandy ruled societal circles.

"My girlfriend and I like to dress up Victorian, or 'Vicky,' and we both have our preferences within the period. Most people's idea of the Victorian era is based on the fashions that followed the death of Prince Albert, when Queen Victoria went into mourning and the entire country wore black. But *before* that, people wore crazy colors—fuchsias and bright colors—with lots of accessories; top hats and brilliantly colored vests.

"The best thing about dressing up in Victorian fashion, especially in California, is that it just doesn't make sense to wear these heavy coats, frocks and vests. But that's the reason it's so good to do it.

"Secondly, it's the precise idea of emulating this time that we have no connection to. We aren't weighed down by its conventions. We're not celebrating it in a way where we're glorifying its imperfections or relishing its ideals. We can just wear its clothing and emulate the fashion without any regards to its true deeper meaning. We're not doing it for status or stature.

"The Dandy, which I'm trying to emulate, is never the fop or the coxcomb. Never the merely dressy fellow, nor the vulgar snob. It's not about being snobbish or prudish, it's about enjoying and celebrating a sense of fashion for the sake of it. That's dressing Vicky."

[www.plugresearch.com](http://www.plugresearch.com)

**OBSESSIONS: DAEDELUS**







AUDIOFILE:  
TALI

**KIWI MIC CONTROLLER KEEPS IT ALL IN THE FAMILY.**

As musical bodyguards go, they don't come much more menacing than the dudes in the Full Cycle clique. Long revered as the UK's premier collective of drum & bass soldiers, Bristol bad boys Krust, Die and Roni Size are set to unleash a new weapon on unsuspecting ears: a sleek songstress by the name of Tali. On her new LP, *Lyric On My Lip*, the singer proves that she's more than a mere Smurfette fulfilling the demands of her masculine cohorts—she's a veritable dominatrix on the mic.

"I present an opportunity for them to express another side of themselves," she says of her collaboration with the Full Cyclists. "They haven't really had an opportunity to do this with a vocalist before. I can tap into each of their strengths to fit

the moods I want to communicate. Each of the boys has very different interests, and that lets me explore all the sides of my personality."

Such is the case on the album's "Grey Days," which finds Krust stitching together string sequences to climactic effect, providing a noirish backdrop for Tali's somber tale-telling. Elsewhere, Roni Size indulges his technoid fetish on "High Hopes," a dancefloor smasher wound so tightly it seems set to explode.

Whether she's getting all hot and bothered over Die's r&b-flavored jams or rasping through one of Clipz's apocalyptic cuts, the New Zealand native stretches her genre's vocal spectrum past the breaking point. "I'm a pure d&b head, and when I'm at a party, I don't want to hear someone constantly rhyming," she explains. "If a person has the ability to follow a melody, vary their voice, vary

the tempo—that's what gets the crowd hyped. An MC can chop and change just like a DJ."

Within the shadowy confines of drum & bass, Tali cuts a refreshingly coquettish figure, having previously imbued such tunes as Suv's "Do You Remember Me?" with raw-throated candor. Still, as proud as she is of her melodic skills, the Kiwi's not to be fucked with on the mic, delivering some of the rawest rhymes this side of her mentor, Dynamite MC.

"I always ask my friends, 'Do I sound like a man?'" she says. "And my friends will be like, 'Yeah, you do sound more masculine than the average female, but that's an attribute! I'm not some screechy little chick up there, you know? I want everyone to know that I can get the crowd hyped.'"

*Lyric On My Lip is out now on Full Cycle. www.fullcycle.co.uk*

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## FAILE SAFE

Two parts NYC, one part Minneapolis, **FAILE** flips the script on traditional visual aesthetics. Founders Patrick McNeil, Aiko Nakagawa and Patrick Miller have been turning the avant art scene on its ear since the summer of 2000, when their eye-popping posters first hit the mean streets of Manhattan. "We had a big printing session in Minneapolis," Miller says. "Then Patrick and Aiko went to work canvassing the streets of New York, and FAILE was really born. "

Predominantly black and white, FAILE's screenprinted posters depict a collection of curious, eyebrow-raising scenarios. Placards featuring a young boy nibbling on the head of a rabbit, Jesus standing next to a man wearing a tiger mask and the trio's iconic dog image are pasted on brick walls, dumpsters and switchboxes from New York to Paris, Berlin to Tokyo. But to pigeonhole the collective simply as a group of street artists would be unfair. Founded on the principle of collaboration, FAILE also delves into the realms of fashion and publishing.

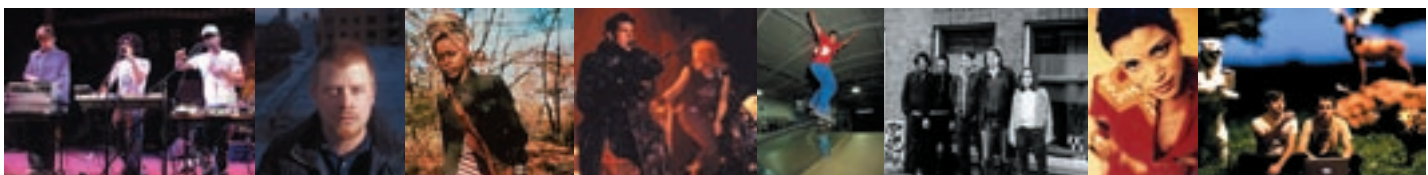
"Fashion just sort of happened, as Patrick got to know Scott Morrison from [clothing designers] Paper Denim & Cloth," Miller explains. "It is an exciting area right now for a lot of designers and continues to inspire us as more projects come our way."

In addition to nurturing other collaborative clothing endeavors with Staple Design and Pro-Keds, FAILE has also created its own niche—publishing high concept, limited-run art books, such as *Orange, Death, Boredom* and the Spring 2004 release *Lavender*. "The books aim to bring artists from all different mediums, experienced and inexperienced, together through a theme," Miller explains. "It really is the best way to tap into something collective."

With various projects and a daunting schedule of exhibitions slated for 2004, the collective's future looks not just busy, but glaringly bright. *Matthew Newton*

[www.failenet](http://www.failenet)

**SPIN CYCLE** MTV2 recently launched a new show called *MTV2 Bashment*, featuring half an hour of the best new dancehall and reggae videos; the first episode was hosted by **Elephant Man** • **Ladybug Mecca**, formerly of **Digable Planets**, will drop her debut, *Rebirth of Mec*, in February • December wrapped up a tour by the dinosaurs of pop dance: **C&C Music Factory**, **The KLF** and **Snap** • **The DFA** are currently producing new 12"s with No Wave allstars **Liquid Liquid** • As reported by *Hiphopslam.com*, **Bomb Records** owner **Dave Paul** was interrogated by Secret Service agents after a phone worker from Cheap Tickets reported that Paul had made remarks about George Bush while booking a flight to Oklahoma City for a gig • In the first quarter of 2004, **Mush Records** releases new albums from **Opus**, **Adlib** and **CLOUDEAD** • As of December 2, **mp3.com** is dead • **Brand Nubian** is now signed to the **Babygrande** label • In February, **EI-P** releases a new album of collabs with free jazz icons like **Matthew Shipp** and **William Parker** • **New Ninjas**: The **Ninja Tune** label boasts new signings for 2004: former **Anticon** member **Sixtoo**; **Aesop Rock** beatmaker **Blockhead**; and **Hollertronix** nutter **Diplo** • Best wishes for a speedy recovery go out to Chicago house hero **Paul Johnson**, who had his left leg amputated on October 17, 2003. He's now in good condition • **DJ Xpress** is a new venture that will allow downloads of new and classic dance tracks and remixes on the internet • Chicago's **Kranky** label sees its first-ever vinyl-only release, **Keith Fullerton Whitman's** *Antithesis*. They've also got new stuff on the way from **Out Hud**, **Loscil** and **Charalambides** • In November, Mike from **Electric Birds** (Deluxe Records) opened a skate park in Seattle, WA • **Ohm Resistance** and **Soundclash Distribution** have started a new label, **Obliterati**, for abrasive, industrial drum & bass. Ohm is also collaborating with NYC label **Offshore** on a split 10" series • Rumor has it that the U.S. Postal Service have sent Sub Pop band **The Postal Service** a cease and desist letter • Watch **Mike Maldonado** lipside to Sonic Youth: classic skate videos from Toy Machine—*Welcome to Hell*, *Jump Off A Building* and *Heavy Metal*—were recently released as a box set • Sydney, Australia's **Big Day Out** Festival runs from January 16-February 1 this year with **Felix Da Housecat**, **David Holmes** and NZ hip-hopper **King Kapsi** performing • Label lore: **Andrew Macari** has just started his **Greenhouse** imprint, **DJ Spun** breaks new ground with his label **Rong Music** and **Coco Machete** launches a new sublabel, **Coco Soul** • On January 27, **Raptivism** will release a DVD called *Wholistic Living for the Hip-Hop Generation*, featuring **Common**, **Erykah Badu** and **Dead Prez** giving health and diet tips • **Warp Records** recently launched an mp3 download site at [www.bleep.com](http://www.bleep.com) • **Absolut Vodka** recently launched its first music campaign, with tracks celebrating the brand by **Aril Brikha**, **Rollercone** and **Taxi**. Hear them at [www.threetracks.com](http://www.threetracks.com) • **Attica Blues'** **Tony Nwachukwu** launched a new night in November called **CDR**, where producers can gather 'round to listen to each others' latest tunes on the hi-fi. Check it at [www.burntprogress.com](http://www.burntprogress.com) • Buy your dutty, mucky dancehall DVDs and mixtapes at [www.reggaesound.com](http://www.reggaesound.com) • Cuteness resides at [www.dynamo-ville.com](http://www.dynamo-ville.com) • Spun out.



from left: cLOUDEAD, EI-P, Erykah Badu, The KLF, Mike Maldonado, Out Hud, Ladybug Mecca, The Postal Service



## NOTTINGHAM'S HOTTEST MC MIXES RHYME AND REASON.

There are drums and then there are *drums*, percussive hits that induce seizures in the meek and unsuspecting. Much to his good fortune, British MC Cappo has enlisted a couple of producers who understand that rap isn't potent unless it makes your backside shake. With their trademark "heavy Bronx" style, beat-makers DJ Paul S and Ivory (together known as the P Brothers) turned the Nottingham-based rapper's first full-length, *Spaz The World*, into one of the most impressive debuts of 2003.

Though he's quick to tout the P Brothers' "huge drums and five thousand-yard snares," Cappo can also take bows for his own style, which puts paid to the notion that British rappers are too smart for their own good. While

Americans have long been mistrustful of an English emcee, Cap brings both brains and brawn to the party, littering his thuggish battle screeds with high-falutin' references to Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

Lest you think him some Anticon-esque intellectual, the 24-year-old's delivery is gruff and direct, as on "Cirque des Clowns," when he declares "I say it clearly so you catch what I'm putting out fully." On "15-10," meanwhile, Cappo outlines his approach to emceeing, emphasizing the importance of being understood: "If you're looking for the sentence, you're in the right place, man/I string up and lash 'em into columns of engagement."

"You've got a lot of people out there right now who are trying to rhyme very technically," he explains, on the phone from his home in Nottingham. "I like to keep it basic so people can get what I'm saying and not make it feel

like they're listening to noise."

Cap distances himself from London's burgeoning bouncement scene, preferring to forge a uniquely Northern take on British hip-hop. "I pretty much stick to myself up here," he says. "I don't really listen to a lot of English releases because I don't want it to affect my way of doing things."

That strategy is paying handsome dividends for the rapper, who recently earned props from Public Enemy's Chuck D at a gig in Norwich. In the aftermath of a fire that destroyed the studio Cap once shared with the P Brothers, gaining the respect of the American legend was an especially heartening development. "It was bad news for a while," says Cappo of the blaze. "But we're back on our feet now, looking for a new studio, a new place to call home. It still feels like we're only just getting started."

*Spaz The World is out now on Zebra Traffic. www.zebratrafic.co.uk*



**LA'S LEFTFIELD RAPPER BOASTS BIG SCREEN DREAMS.**

If it's Monday in Mid-city, it means movie night at 2Mex's house. Since the end of last summer, the easy-going LA rapper has been hosting Movie Mondays, inviting fans over to his house to watch DVDs. While there are plenty of heads out there who would love to take 2Mex up on his offer, the invitation comes with one strict proviso: no dudes allowed.

"I've already got so many homies, it's out of control," says the 30-year old bachelor, known to his parents as Alejandro Ocana. "I need some ladies to hang out with. So if the voice on the other end of the telephone is female, then she gets to come over. Simple as that."

Lucky ladies have so far been treated to flicks like *Bowling For Columbine* and *Old*

*School*, a pair of films which reflect 2Mex's lyrical steez: incisive social commentary delivered with comedic flair. As part of the famed Visionaries crew, 'Mex flexes a more classic style, his words hugging tight to the beats provided by old-school cats like DJ Rhettmatic and KeyKool. But where the SoCal crew's upcoming LP, *Pangaea*, is steeped in boom-bap, 2Mex's latest solo joint on Temporary Whatever, *Sweat Lodge Infinite*, finds him walking on the wild side, spitting some of the spiciest sequences this side of Sun Ra.

"When I'm working on my own shit, or when I'm working with cats like Busdriver and AWOL, we don't feel any pressure to make hype tracks," he explains. Indeed, hype is just about the last word to describe *Sweat Lodge Infinite*, on which producer Longevity (best known for his work with Darkleaf) crafts beats so discordant

they would make E-I-P wince. Inspired by Longevity's pre-apocalyptic noise assaults, 'Mex lays down trippy business, as on "Seconds Ago," wherein he announces that "seconds ago it was decided/we are in the middle of forever."

For his forthcoming self-titled album (produced by indie rap darling Omid), 2Mex promises a return to earth, harking back to his early rhyming days at LA's famed Good Life Café. With two new albums and cross-continental tours in the works, 2004 promises to be the biggest year yet for the MC, which leaves him wondering whether Movie Mondays might soon be cancelled.

"Movies are cool," he says with a chuckle, "but I'd rather be playing shows."

*Sweat Lodge Infinite is out now on Temporary Whatever.*

[www.2mexla.com](http://www.2mexla.com)



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# UNICORNS BEGAT ANCHORS



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**SWOLLEN MEMBERS**  
*Heavy*  
Heavy concocts an intoxicating blend of concise rhymes and grimy, bass-heavy beats and includes a bonus DVD. Featuring Abstract Rude, Son Doobie and others. Don't sleep!



**VISIONARIES**  
*Pangaea*  
The third album installment from Los Angeles' super-group, "Pangaea" is a heartfelt triumph for the entire hip-hop massive.





From the bunkers of Berlin to the beaches of Puerto Rico, XLR8R takes time out to report on four essential events for the electronic music fiend.

**FESTIVALS: NIGHT AND DAY**

At marke B, Cobra Killers Annika and Gina enter the club.



At Candela, Afronaught, Dixon and Georg Levin admire the view of San Juan.

**DOPE BY DEFINITION** Ireland's second annual **Dublin Electronic Arts Festival (DEAF)**, held October 17-27, 2003, once again highlighted Dublin's huge talent pool, and brought in well-known international electronic acts. While the city played host to a multitude of events over a 10-day period, the showcase gigs were held at an industrial labyrinth known as the Guinness Storehouse. Over two nights and five floors, the Storehouse played host to live PAs and DJ performances, as well as cutting-edge visuals curated by Pixelcorps and Del9. Planet Mu's Ambulance, Splitloop, Plaid, Decal from the Rotters Golf Club, The Bug, Lowtek and Robert Hood previewed new material, while DJ sets by Technasia, Photek and Detroit's DJ Bone kept the thousands gathered satisfied. The Firehouse Skank room provided serious sound system action with a gaggle of MCs and DJs busting reggae dancehall, dub and leftfield flavors. The most inspiring part about the festival had to be the overwhelming support for local acts, which was repaid in full with wicked live performances all around. *Gerald "GIK" Kelleher*  
[www.deafireland.com](http://www.deafireland.com)

**MARKE OF DISTINCTION** Over the past decade, the global dance music scene has traced many paths to Berlin as Europe's secret capital. Despite brutal economic times, Berlin still supports a web of prolific nightlife scenes—from nu-jazz to indie experimental to techno to dancehall—along with a complex network of record shops and labels. For the past three years, members of the Ocean Club artist collective Thomas Fehlmann, Gudrun Gut and Daniel Meteo have celebrated the city's indie label scene with their annual **marke B** festival, the largest of which happened November 7 and 8, 2003 at Berlin's multilevel WMF/Café Moskau club. Generously funded by the Berlin Senate's department for economics, labor and women's issues, marke B 03 featured live sets by faves like Five Deez, Cobra Killer and Monolake, and newbies like the acoustic Guther and neo-dubblers Bus featuring Glasgow MC Soom-T; DJ sets by label reps from Bpitch Control, Shitkatapult, IK7 and others; and a sprawling label gallery with booths showcasing the city's diverse range, from stalwarts like breakbeat crew Dangerous Drums and minimalists ~scape, to nu-house label Diamonds & Pearls and breakout electronica imprint Laboratory Instinct. If you wanna know what the future looks like, this fest is the place—no city loves its record labels like Berlin. *Ron Nachmann*  
[www.markeb.de](http://www.markeb.de)

**SAN JUAN SOUND-OFF** Detroit, West London and...Viejo San Juan? While Puerto Rico may not be the first spot that comes to mind in connection with cutting-edge broken beat music, the **Candela Art & Music Festival** (October 11-13, 2003) is set to establish the island as a vital link in the global chain of progressive music. For the second edition of the festival, organizer Pablo Rodriguez flew in luminaries from the worlds of Afro-Latin house, downtempo and deep house, as well as visual artists like HVW8, Doze Green and Swifty, for three days of open-minded exchange. The long weekend of partying kicked off Thursday with an absolutely mad Ubiquity showcase at Rumba, where local percussionists added flavor to sets from Jamie Strong, John Beltran and Proper LA's DJ Valida. Friday, outdoors in Plaza San José, saw deepness from Osunlade and a live PA from John Arnold, while inside the Candela Bar Afronaught drove a packed crowd nuts with CD-R specials. Saturday's event at the Plaza showcased the indigenous skills of Local 12 and others before the festival's astounding climax, an inspired live performance from Ayro. If Beltran's newly recorded ode to "La Candela" is any indication, this could be the start of something big. *Peter Nicholson*  
[www.candelabar.com](http://www.candelabar.com)

**GOING DUTCH** Is Amsterdam the new Miami? If Richard Zijlma and the good folks behind **Amsterdam Dance Event** have their way, it will be, plus the best elements of Midem and Sonar as well. ADE (October 29-November 1, 2003) brought together artists like Blaze and Moloko with business tycoons like Tommy Boy's Tom Silverman and Skint Recordings' Damien Harris, and slapped them together with aspiring labels, DJs and promoters in Amsterdam's fabled coffeehouses, hip bars and glitzy clubs. Where other electronic music gatherings are shoddily organized schmooze fests, ADE satisfied both business and entertainment needs. Located at the gothic Felix Meritis building in the center of town, the conference provided on-site cafes, listening rooms with multiple decks and CD players for demos, free internet stations, and organized intimate gatherings such as a distribution cocktail hour with key players from Europe, Australia and England. And just when you'd grown tired of talking mechanical royalties, a night filled with hot performances from Derrick May, Sascha Funke and Agent Sumo was waiting to rock your ass. When the smoke finally cleared, I had already decided on a return trip next year. *Tomas Palermo*  
[www.amsterdamdanceevent.com](http://www.amsterdamdanceevent.com)



DEAF Guests



MC Soom-T at marke B



Local 12 at Candela



Moloko at Amsterdam Dance Event



## STEADY MAC' IN

The Macintosh computer—that tried-and-true business workhorse—is also a kick-ass gaming machine. In the off-hours, boot it up and check out these excellent diversions. But buyer beware: most new titles require Mac OS X, and some have heavy system requirements, so check the box before purchase. *Narasu Rebbapragada*



**YOU'RE NO ANGEL** Nothing pumps up the adrenaline like a shooter, and *Halo* (Macsoft; \$49.99) is one of the very best. Previously an X-Box exclusive, this game should be out for Mac by the end of the year. You play a seven-foot supersoldier defending humanity against a 24th century warrior race called the Covenant and battling on the ring-shaped world of Halo.

You're equipped with sci-fi weaponry and vehicles for kicking alien ass, an activity made beautiful by the cinematic music and lush graphics.

[www.macsoftgames.com](http://www.macsoftgames.com)

**BLOOD SPORT** For more gore, more dismemberment and more red blood (*Halo's* blood is purple and green), go for the five games that make up *Unreal Tournament 2003* (Macsoft; \$19.99): Deathmatch (kill everyone); Team Deathmatch (kill everyone but your team); Capture the Flag (a deadly version of the innocent campground game); Double Domination (capture two bases); and Bombing Run (rugby with guns). If this doesn't satisfy your cravings for violence, look for *Unreal Tournament 2004* (\$49.99) set for release in February 2004—gauze not included.

[www.macsoftgames.com](http://www.macsoftgames.com)



**SPY GAMES** Add a plot line to your shooting with *No One Lives Forever* (Macplay; \$29.99), a James Bond-style thriller starring a sexy agent named Cate Archer. She's on a globetrotting mission to destroy the terrorist organization H.A.R.M, armed with an arsenal of weapons and gadgets—including lock-picking barrettes and exploding lipstick—that would make Q proud. And just to spice things up, the recently released *No One Lives*

*Forever II* (Macplay; \$49.99) has all these things plus new missions, new weapons (including cross bows and Ninja swords) and new destinations like China.

[www.macplay.com](http://www.macplay.com)



**CREATURE OF HOBBIT** Get in touch with your inner geek and check out the fantasy real-time strategy game *Warcraft III: Reign of Chaos* and its expansion pack, *Frozen Throne* (Blizzard; both \$39.95). With a look and feel similar to *Lord of the Rings*, you pick from one of four races—Human, Orcs, the Undead, and Night Elves—and prepare for war against the demonic Burning Legion. Manage your armies, technology and spell-casting heroes properly, and victory will be yours. When wartime

gets bleak, bizarre characters like drunken pandas keep the humor going.

[www.blizzard.com](http://www.blizzard.com)

**MOUNT SIMS** If you're a lover not a fighter, then play *The Sims* (Aspyr; \$49.99), where you control the intimate details of mumbbling miniature humans. Buy them a house, find them friends, and watch them struggle with life's little details. *The Sims* can be great therapy too. Where else can you send a husband swimming, pull up the ladder to the pool and watch him drown, and get away with it? Don't forget to try the six available expansion packs, including *The Sims Unleashed* (where *The Sims* get pets) or *The Sims Superstar* (Aspyr; both \$29.99), where these virtual humans live the glam life of rock stars and supermodels.

[www.aspyr.com](http://www.aspyr.com)



Sims



**SKATE GREAT X** Games fans should check out *Tony Hawk Pro Skater 4* (Aspyr; \$29.99), the latest and most challenging game in the series. Step into the body of Tony Hawk or 13 other pros, and the world becomes your skate park. Try your hand at 14 badass tricks—all without the hospital bills.

[www.aspyr.com](http://www.aspyr.com)

**PUZZLING CONCLUSION** Finally, *Enigma* (Pangeasoftware; \$24.95 CD, \$19.95 download) is a light-hearted arcade game that's easy to play on your laptop. The game involves guiding drops of water through a maze of wacky Technicolor gizmos, as oddly gripping as a futuristic version of *Tetris*. Weird? Yes. Addictive? Yes.

*Narasu Rebbapragada is the games editor at MacAddict magazine.*



## VIDEO GAME REVIEWS

**Rainbow Six 3: Raven Shield**  
(Ubisoft/Xbox, PC/\$49.99)

If you've never progressed beyond Pacman, you might find it difficult to visualize "squad-based counter terror," the concept behind the third iteration of *Rainbow Six*, a game based on the popular Tom Clancy novel. In RS3, much like in Pacman, you'll find yourself disposing of the bad guys in order to finish the level. Unlike Pacman, you must realistically slay the enemy with a variety of weapons including grenade launchers, tear gas canisters, machine guns and sniper rifles. You control up to three squad members by issuing simple commands, which gives some backup when it comes time to rescue a hostage or diffuse bombs. Plug in the Xbox Live headset and you can yell voice commands to your team while they storm a room full of unsuspecting terrorists and you sneak in the side door and shoot them in the back. Simple family fun. *Andrew Smith*

[www.raven-shield.com](http://www.raven-shield.com)

Ratings:



**Time Crisis 3** (Namco/PS2/\$59.99)

Ultra-violence junkies will appreciate *Time Crisis 3*, a video game that comes with its own gun. Apparently one of the most accurate light-guns available for use at home, the large, orange pistol that arrives with this version of the arcade classic plugs into a PS2's USB port. Now it's time to kill. Moving from the beach scenario, where it's possible to get crushed by a falling lighthouse or mowed down by parachuting paratroopers and kamikaze ninjas, you find yourself in the trenches of a battlefield and eventually on the back of a truck being tailed by helicopters and bad guys in Jeeps. Before you know it, you and your friend who "never plays video games" will be addicted to waving around a large hunk of dayglo plastic at your TV. Definitely thrilling! *Andrew Smith*

[www.namco.com](http://www.namco.com)

Ratings:



RATING KEY: = Ultra-Violence = Girl Friendly = Stoney = Geek Fest = High Anxiety

FEATURING DANCE HITS BY:  
**PAUL OAKENFOLD**  
**IAN VAN DAHL**  
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**WHO DA FUNK**  
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WE  
MAKE ANY  
CROWD  
A  
DANCEHALL  
CROWD.

# BAD MAN RISING

WITH HIS EXPLOSIVE PERFORMANCES AND OUTRAGEOUS HOOKS,  
ELEPHANT MAN TAKES DANCEHALL TO A HIGHER LEVEL.

WORDS JON WELDON  
IMAGES CHRISTOPHER WOODCOCK

Jamaica's "energy god" is neither a new supersonic motorcycle nor a potent mix of the island's notoriously strong spiced rum, but the nickname of an entertainer with blazing dyed-blond hair and a penchant for inventing new dance moves. In just three short years, O'Neil Bryan, who tramples the stage as Elephant Man, has taken the dancehall charts by storm with a string of number-one hits—most with complementary dance moves that ensure their longevity with the club crowd.

With a rhyme flow influenced by the wild American rap of Ludacris and Busta Rhymes and hooks influenced by the epic pop of Survivor—and often riding faster, unconventional dancehall riddims that fuse Indian percussion, handclaps and techy synths—Ele's is the sound of Jamaica embracing the 21st century. Following on the heels of Sean Paul's no-shorts pop crossover (or rather, *takeover*), Ele has just dropped his fourth album, *Good 2 Go*, on the US-based VP-Atlantic label.

Working his way up from western Kingston's blighted Seaview Gardens neighborhood (home to top-a-top DJs like Bounty Killer) to international stardom has been no easy task. But as Ele screams on the intros of all of his recent songs, he's "good to go"—in other words, ready to take on the world.

[Just prior to this interview in New York, XLR8R writer Jon Weldon handed a fan letter from one of his students in Brooklyn to Ele, who generously penned a response.]

**XLR8R:** The letter you just responded to is from a student of mine who actually just beat up another student and got suspended for a week. What did you tell her?

**Elephant Man:** Stay focused. Don't let anyone get you on your wrong side.

**XLR8R:** Brooklyn youth are quick to fight. Is it any different in Jamaica?

**Ele:** It's the same, no different.

**XLR8R:** Are the youth frustrated?

**Ele:** Not really—they happy. But, you know, if somebody step on your toes, they're quick to fight. That's straight Jamaica. But I love Brooklyn. I love the Brooklyn youth, too.

**XLR8R:** Your "Jamaica" song sounds a little more conscious in that respect.

**Ele:** Oh yeah, you know, I like to do a tune and let my peoples know that we don't forget them. Biggin' up the Jamaicans all over the world.

**XLR8R:** You just opened for Jay-Z tonight. How is that crowd different from a dancehall crowd?

**Ele:** You know, we make any crowd a dancehall crowd.



WE  
KEEP IT REAL.  
WE PLAY  
THE RIDDIM  
SO THE HOOK  
WILL SOUND GOOD.  
THAT'S  
REAL MUSIC.



**XL8R:** Killah Priest sounds different than usual on [the Good 2 Go track] “Who We Are.” Why the different look from him?

**Ele:** I give him the dancehall beat to get a different side of Killah Priest. You get a lighter side of Killah Priest, not as hardcore. So the kids can move and say, “Yeah man, Killah Priest is *baad*.”

**XL8R:** How much input do you have on the beats you use?

**Ele:** Sometime I get other peoples’ beats and add my own ideas to them. You know, sit down and spend time on it.

**XL8R:** Like on “Cock Up Your Bumper,” where the keys match your hook perfectly?

**Ele:** We go into the studio and play the riddim to the hook. We keep it real. We play the riddim so the hook will sound good. That’s real music. It doesn’t make sense to have a riddim that you [have to try hard to sound good on].

**XL8R:** Why do you have more American guests than Jamaicans on this album?

**Ele:** I wanted people to realize that we got de connection, de link. We tryin’ to show their stuff can match up over here. It can be great to show de people that we gotta blend together. This album we’re trying to take on a wider scale, get to a wider market.

**XL8R:** Are you changing your rapping tempo on “Nah Gwaan a Jamaica”?

**Ele:** I like to change my factor of life. I like to challenge myself. Sometimes I do some crazy stuff, man, trust me.

**XL8R:** Help me out with “Bun Down Dirty.” I can’t even understand your flow on that.

**Ele:** I’m sayin’, “Let me see the lighters dem flash. So we know you ah bun dem down.”

**XL8R:** Then you really get going between the hook on that tune...

**Ele:** Yeah [*indcipherable high speed vocal patter*]...it’s like speed-rapping, you knowwhattamean? [*Continues the high speed acapella for about a minute*]

**XL8R:** Is that a new style?

**Ele:** It’s a new style I’ve developed. I’m bringing a new style, changing. A new style of riding the riddim—a speed DJ. You definitely have to know that DJ is crazy.

**XL8R:** What does “Bun Fi Bun” mean?

**Ele:** When your woman is cheating on you and you find out and bun her back. When the woman find out, it’s like, “Gyaal, you gonna get bunned!”

**XL8R:** And what’s going on with the electro riddim on “Signal De Plane”?

**Ele:** I tried to take that to the next level. It’s like a rave beat, crazy.

**XL8R:** The dance for “Pon De River” looks like you’re trying to jump out of water but keep getting pulled back.

**Ele:** Well, it’s “Pon de river, ’pon de bank.” ’Pon de river, ’pon de bank. In and out, in and out.

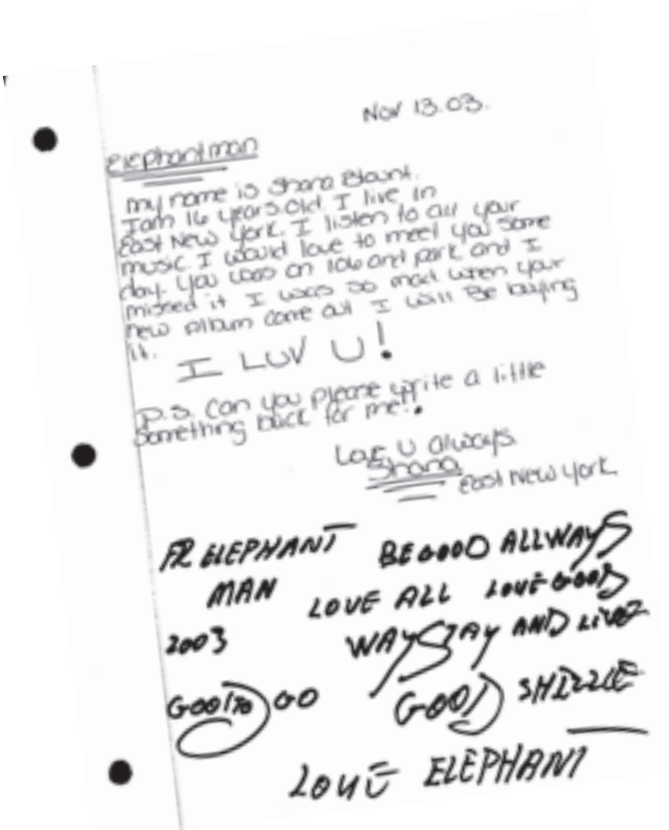
**XL8R:** So what’s the worst thing to do when I roll up in a packed dancehall club?

**Ele:** Not to dance.

**XL8R:** But what if I have the stiff white-boy hips and can’t move it so good?

**Ele:** Ah, we not gonna put you out like that, man. We not gonna do that. We show you what’s up.

Good To Go is out now on VP-Atlantic. For more check [www.vprecs.com](http://www.vprecs.com) and [www.ebreggae.com](http://www.ebreggae.com).





# GALLONG GYAL

**MEN BEING  
HOMOPHOBIC  
ARE ALSO  
[BY IMPLICATION]  
BEING  
MISOGYNISTIC  
TO ME.**

Away from the hubbub of Manhattan, in the laidback Long Island suburb of Valley Stream, Ce'Cile Charlton breezes into Big Yard Records' conference room, apologizing for her lateness and taking a seat. The singer, born into a prosperous and prominent family in Mandeville, Jamaica, fell in love with the sounds of the bashment as a young girl. Through a combination of determination, luck and hard work, she's made her name as the island's top female "singjay." Having paid her dues working at the Kingston-based Celestial Sounds Studio, mentored by producer Steven Ventura, her defining moment came with 2001's "Changes." A tune on her own Chiney Gal riddim, "Changes," took a wry look at sexual politics and lampooned the genre's biggest male stars: "*Well, Bounty Killa too stiff so' im cyan position/Mi nuh see why gal a run dung pon Elephant Man.*" With a deal now inked with US label Delicious Vinyl, Ce'Cile hopes to take her distinctive brand of girl-power dancehall to an international audience. She has a disarming smile and a voice like honey, and is quick to share her thoughts.

**XLR8R: So how long have you been working on your album altogether?**

**Ce'Cile:** I've been working on it since I left Celestial Sounds and did the Chiney Gal rhythm that I used for "Changes." After I did that song, everybody came up to me and said, "You need to do an album." So, I've been working on it, and believe me, this album has been finished many times and scrapped, and finished and scrapped. I'm glad that I made those decisions, because looking back now, if I had put the album out then, it would have been wack.

**XLR8R: Well, you're pretty versatile—you produce, you sing, you chat, you have it all covered...**

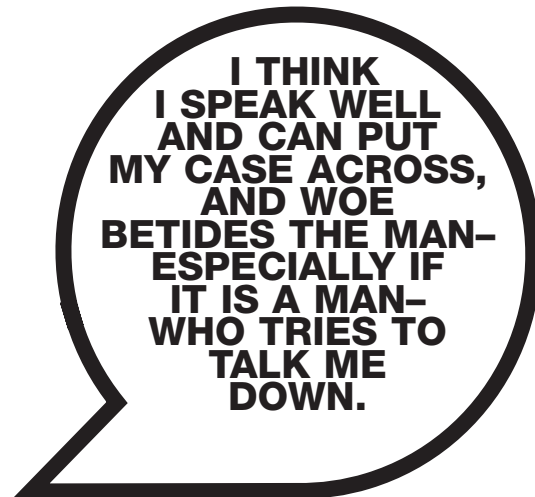
**CC:** Well, all of that I learned when I was at Celestial Sounds. I have a song here that I have to let you hear. I'm going to play it for you later. But this [*holding up a CD-R*] is how I used to sing—all very sweet and girly. I had to teach myself to become a dancehall artist. I listened to people like Chevelle Franklyn and Diana King—they had this "singjay" style before anyone else. Then I met Tanya Stephens, and she works like that as well. It's much more interesting than the *pretty* singing that I did. It sounded "street" to me, so I built a street vibe—that's basically what I did.



**EVER ASK YOURSELF WHAT HAPPENED TO ALL THE STRONG WOMEN IN REGGAE? BACK IN THE DAY LISTENERS ROCKED TO RITA MARLEY, SISTER NANCY, JUDY MOWATT AND CHEVELLE FRANKLYN. TOP SINGER-DJ CE'CILE ISN'T WONDERING—SHE'S BLAZING A PATH TO THE TOP WITH A NUMBER ONE SINGLE ON THE DANCEHALL CHARTS AND A NEW ALBUM ON DELICIOUS VINYL.**

**WORDS DAVE STELFOX IMAGES MICHAEL SCHMELLING**





**XLR8R:** So who did you work with on *Bad Gal*?

**CC:** It's surprising, actually; I only ended up working with myself, Scatta [producer Cordel "Scatta" Burrell] from Kings Of Kings, and some German producers from the Germaican label. I don't believe that music can only come from big-name producers—there are many talented people. I'm trying to get "Can U Do The Work," the track I did with Sean Paul [on Jeremy Harding's Liquid riddim], too. That track was made two years ago for both of us originally, but y'know he's with Atlantic Records now and it was on his album, [*Dutty Rock*]. So I'm not sure if that going to pose a problem. But Sean is my friend, so if it's not happening, then I'm not going to push it. We're from Jamaica, we're friends and we can always work together again.

**XLR8R:** I know this isn't the sort of question you should ask a lady, but how old are you now?

**CC:** [*Laughs*] I'm 27, and it's fine! Sometimes [people tell me], "Don't tell anyone how old you are because you look much younger." It's because I got this baby face, but it doesn't matter. I mean it's *dancehall* music, not pop—it's supposed to be real, so let's keep it that way. With or without the mainstream, although we're glad for that success, there will *always* be dancehall music. We have our own little rules.

**XLR8R:** I'm glad we've got onto this topic, because I do want to ask what you want to get from this album in terms of the recent upsurge in popularity of dancehall?

**CC:** Well, I want it to reach as many people as possible. And because of the way I was brought up, before I started chatting hardcore dancehall, I sang almost in English, so people would be able to understand me. I mean, I grew up speaking English and was never around much patois—my mother would have beat me to death if I'd started talking it at home! There's nothing wrong with coming from the ghetto, but I can't really pretend that I'm from there. I never feel I have to sing certain things to be "authentic." I just want to be me, with my own personality. Outside of the album, I've worked with Shy FX, Stanton Warriors, Shaggy and all kinds of people, and I can ride any rhythm. So I want to do more collaborations, for sure.

**XLR8R:** "Changes" was really the point that you became a proper dancehall artist and started to get a big following. Most of all, it gained you many female fans, but you gave some big male deejays a hard time in

that song. Did that cause you any problems?

**CC:** No, it was the best thing I ever did! The only person who was a bit vocal—not too much, only so as it worked for him and for me—was Bounty Killer. He made some comments, but I'm so glad he did because it did me a huge favor. The song was a joke and that's why I think women liked it so much. I mean, we just appreciate humor in those terms more than men with their big egos!

**XLR8R:** So how hard is it for a woman to make it in dancehall?

**CC:** I think it's just different, but I say what I have to say and I don't care. Like right now I have a song called "Do It To Me." It's a song about oral sex, and that's a big taboo in Jamaica. So I'm like, enough already—every man is singing that you shouldn't do it to a woman, but there have been other songs saying that a woman should do it to a man and that's just wrong! First of all, many of the men are lying, and secondly, I just wanted to say that it was okay. But then Lady Saw came to me and asked me: "Why are you doing this? It's going to mash up your career." So I said that if it was, then my career needed to be mashed up, because if I can't write and say what I want, then I shouldn't be singing. You should be assertive and push and shock people. I think I speak well and can put my case across, and woe betides the man—*especially* if it is a man—who tries to talk me down. I mean, I think it's ridiculous that people are so homophobic in Jamaica, too.

**XLR8R:** I wanted to address that, because you've made a passing mention of it in "More Than One Time" [on Scatta's *Bad Company* riddim], and I would guess that it's a view that puts you at odds with a lot of people at home.

**CC:** I have nothing against people being gay and never will. Men being homophobic are also [by implication] being misogynist to me. But sometimes I hear women using words like "chi-chi man" in their music, too. It's bad enough for a man to say those things, but a woman should never, ever do it.

**XLR8R:** Why are you calling your album *Bad Gal*? You're obviously not—you're actually really sweet.

**CC:** [*Laughs*] Ah, it's just my moniker for this season. I'm "Bad Gal" until I get the debut album out, then I'm going to change and be someone else for the next thing...

For more on Ce'Cille check out [www.deliciousvinyl.com](http://www.deliciousvinyl.com) and [www.cecilleflava.com](http://www.cecilleflava.com).

# Classic Dub & Dancehall Roots Start Here...



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“UNITY IS STRENGTH.”





MY MESSAGE IS RAW, MUCKY, DUTTY, GREASY, GRIMY AND I WANT THE PEOPLE OUT THERE TO SEE IT AND FEEL IT.

Vybz Kartel



Tanya Stephens

# REAL RAGGA REBELS

SINCE ITS BEGINNINGS, JAMAICAN DANCEHALL HAS EXERTED A HUGE INFLUENCE ON GLOBAL DANCE MUSIC, FROM THE BEATS AND RHYMES OF STATESIDE R&B AND HIP-HOP TO THE SOUND-SYSTEM CULTURE OF THE UK'S HARDCORE RAVE UNDERGROUND.

WORDS DAVE STELFOX  
IMAGES AFFLICTED

While Shabba Ranks and Beenie Man have gone on to enjoy global stardom, dancehall's presence in the worldwide market has been transient at best, and subject to the whims of fashion—flavor of the month in January and all but forgotten by March.

But this boom-bust cycle is changing with a new wave of artists and producers—including vocalists Sean Paul and Wayne Wonder and Diwali rhythm creator Stephen "Lenky" Marsden—colonizing Top 10s on both sides of the Atlantic. These guys are staking reggae's claim to the mainstream in a way not seen since the breakthrough of Bob Marley and the Wailers back in the late '70s.

With high-profile artists such as Beyoncé, Blu Cantrell and Busta Rhymes all eagerly forging links with this most vital and fascinating of genres, it seems dancehall is now here to stay. What's more, there's no shortage of talent capable of similar crossover. With Jamaica producing a greater number of records per capita than any other country, competition within the industry is fierce. Here, we present a group of uniquely gifted performers with all the originality, grit and drive necessary to make it to the next level.

#### UP TO THE TIME: VYBZ KARTEL

Vybz Kartel is Jamaica's premier deejay. That fame's a result of Kartel's combination of intricate, poetic rhymes and his uniquely lopsided, idiosyncratic lyrical flow, which bobs, feints and weaves its way around a rhythm, huddling up to the beats, then breaking free when you least expect it to deliver that knockout punch.

The star has boxed cleverly throughout his career, earning his reputation by defeating all comers at amateur clashes in Kingston, then stepping up to the professional league when the time was right. Starting his recording career as Adi Banton, he soon formed

the Vibes Cartel with friends Escobar and Mr. Lee back in 1996, later taking the name as his own when the group fell apart.

Certainly, it shows something of his confidence that this man should choose to retain the handle of a whole crew, but it's all self-explanatory as far as he's concerned: "I'm pushing the vibes of a whole cartel. My energy is like a group thing."

Working his way up through a string of show-stopping performances at such high-profile dances as the annual Kingston concert Champions In Action at Fort Clarence Beach, Kartel had established himself as a major talent by 1998 when, by chance, he met with Bounty Killer. The artists went on to record the underground hit "Gal Clown" together, and a number of solo hits followed, including "Big Man A Big Man" and the somewhat dubious diatribe against oral sex, "Why You Doing It?"

But his biggest moment came in the shape of 2002's Wayne Marshall collaboration, "New Millennium," which as good as patented his trademark line: "*Inna me Karl Kanil With a bottle of tall Cane!*"

Keeping up this momentum proved no problem, and Kartel's killer "Sweet To The Belly," on Donovan Bennet's Egyptian riddim, sealed a relationship with Don Corleon Records that's come to fruition in his debut album on the UK's Greensleeves label. Including collaborations with Steven "Lenky" Marsden, Baby G Productions' Trevor James and Toronto rapper Kardinal Offishall, *Up 2 Di Time* mixes bashment attitude with the kind of finely tuned sensitivity to Stateside R&B and hip-hop that garnered Kartel the support slot for 50 Cent on the rapper's recent visit to Kingston.

Such a stage evidently suits Kartel—he is, after all, a man with plenty to say. "I want to stimulate people's imagination when they hear me," he reveals. "My message is raw, mucky, dutty, greasy, grimy and I want the people out there to see it and feel it."





Assassin

#### WOMAN ON TOP: TANYA STEPHENS

It says something about dancehall's frenetic pace and its ready supply of new blood that an artist can be considered a true veteran at the grand old age of 30. But this is certainly the case for Tanya Stephens, having burst onto the scene in the early '90s with her breakthrough track, "Is This For Real," on Courtney Cole's Far East riddim and solidified her reputation with 1993's Galaxy P collaboration, "One Touch."

As is apt to happen, though, this early promise didn't immediately translate into the massive success it seemed to indicate, as Stephens temporarily ducked out of the industry to start a family. Tellingly, after this sabbatical, she managed to buck the typical breakthrough-to-downturn career trend in Jamaican music and went from strength to strength, releasing three albums: 1994's *Big Tings A Gwan*, 1997's *Hype Type* and 1998's *Ruff Ryder*.

However, it's in recent years, while concentrating on the singles market, that Stephens's time appears to have truly come, with a run of huge hits that includes "Buss Back Skettel" with Ce'Cile on Chris Goldfinga's Hard Drive riddim, "Can't Touch Me No More" on Lenky's all-conquering Diwali, and the blistering bashment-diva anthem "Soft Inside" on Criebe and Rigo's demented Voom Voom.

Despite a marked upsurge in the visibility of female deejays, her uncompromisingly libidinous chatting style has inevitably led to comparisons with Lady Saw's bump-and-grind rhymes. In reality, though, Stephens remains an original and consciously feminist voice, placing heavy emphasis on women's issues, love and relationships amid all the lyrical rutting. Not only that, her "singjay" technique also allows her to embrace both the youthful vitality of the dance and the more subtle charms of roots reggae, occasionally

dropping the tempo for gorgeous ballads like 2002's "Don't Take My Love For Granted" and the recent Night Nurse-riddim smash, "It's a Pity," on the upstart Germaican label. Talent and presence aside, it's this combination of tenacity and versatility that makes her name one to keep looking out for.

#### SHOTTA TALK: ASSASSIN

Much like hip-hop's MC battles, dancehall draws its pool of vocal talent from a tradition of clashes where deejays throw down their skills in lyrical combat. It's from his prowess in these adversarial encounters that Jeffrey Campbell—a.k.a. Assassin—takes his alias. However, his style is a world away from the confrontational, thugged-out reputation the genre has earned in certain circles.

Taking his cues from established stars such as Buju Banton, Sizzla and Luciano (not to mention elder statesmen like Cutty Ranks), this young artist's main preoccupations are the social issues affecting everyday Jamaicans, from poverty and violence to deprivation and crime. But his is neither the consciousness of righteous anger advocated by his other major influence, the Seaview Gardens DJ Bounty Killer, nor anything similar to that of the ever-more Rastafarian, zealous and foreboding African Star label MC Capleton. Rather, Assassin's take is a positive and constructive ideology of perseverance, education and self-determination.

In the past Campbell has stated, "I really want to make a meaningful contribution to music. That is one of the main reasons why I strive so hard to do well at whatever I do. I look at what is happening in the society and interpret that in my songs for the listeners."



Wayne Marshall (left) rolling tobacco leaf blunts with Elephant Man

In a recent appearance in London's East End, alongside Tanya Stephens and friend and mentor Spragga Benz, the Penthouse label's hottest property proved that, in addition to good intentions, he also has the chops to make a dance bounce, sending a capacity crowd crazy with his smash hit "Pon Di Ends." Campbell is both a prolific songwriter for others as well as a developing dancehall hitmaker. With the success of his own recordings—including the hits "Make Money," "Dedicated to the World" and "Gi Wi Dem" with Red Square on Ward 21's Trilogy riddim—Assassin looks set to lay waste to the competition for some time to come.

#### MR. TRUE: WAYNE MARSHALL

At 23 years old, Wayne Marshall has already blazed a trail in the reggae world, but it's been no easy ride. Despite coming from a financially secure background with supportive parents behind him, the career and life of the artist born Wayne Mitchell has seen death, grief, brushes with the law and no little experience of the ghetto. Originally from downtown Kingston, Marshall's family relocated to a more affluent neighborhood early on, thanks to the success of his father's business. As luck would have it, they became neighbors with dancehall legend King Jammy.

Making firm friends with Jammy's children, the young boy swiftly embarked upon a lifelong love affair with dancehall. Access to Jammy's studio gave him an immediate foothold in this most competitive environment, and also offered vital insight into the skill and discipline involved in all aspects of the music, a lesson he remembers to this day.

Speaking from his home in Kingston as he readies himself for performances across Europe, Marshall says, "Every producer I work with brings something different out in

me and the way I perform. Each one enhances me in a different way and can tell me things that even I didn't know about myself. Recently, I've been working with Lenky, but people like Jeremy Harding, Sly & Robbie, Steelie and Cleevie are all the same—they are specialist musicians. So, I take their knowledge and try to put it into practice for whomever I'm working with. I'm also taking private music lessons now so I can one day reach that standard, myself."

From his calm and eloquent manner, it's difficult to imagine this man having spent time in jail for "conspiracy to kill an officer," but Marshall is adept at taking negative experiences and turning them into positive action. Shortly after his first major single, "Story Done Tell," on Jammy protégés Ward 21's Bada Bada riddim back in 1997, he translated his conviction and the death of a friend into a newfound determination to succeed.

Now, with a welter of hit singles and collaborations with Jamaica's biggest names—including Vybz Kartel, Elephant Man and Bounty Killer—Marshall has signed to VP Records, home to mainstream breakthrough artists Sean Paul and Wayne Wonder. Meanwhile, as his debut album, *Marshall Law*, receives critical acclaim from a wide audience, he is ready to take his career to the next level. "Respect to Sean Paul and to VP for taking real dancehall to the mainstream," Marshall notes. "It's a beautiful thing that people all over the world are appreciating our music and being able to see them when I perform. Now I just want to continue striving to be the best I can."

For more on Tanya Stephens and Wayne Marshall go to [www.vprecords.com](http://www.vprecords.com). For more on Vybz Kartel and Assassin check [www.greensleeves.net](http://www.greensleeves.net).





# RAGGAMUFFIN YEARS

WHEN A GROUP OF CREATIVE WEST KINGSTON YOUTHS TOOK UP THE MICROPHONE IN THE YEARS 1973-1985, A CRUCIAL PHASE OF JAMAICAN DEE-JAY ARTISTRY WAS BORN.

WORDS AND IMAGES DAVID KATZ



Admiral Bailey (opposite page), Josie Wales (this page)



**MY STYLE WAS DIFFERENT BECAUSE I WAS A ROUGH-CUT DIAMOND AND I WAS REAL WITH THE LYRICS. MOST SONGS I MADE IN THOSE TIMES WAS ABOUT CONFRONTATION WITH ME AND POLICE.**

Since the 1940s, the sound system—a huge, outdoor discotheque equipped with speaker boxes and turntables (see *XLR8R*'s sound system pictorial in issue 73)—has been the crucial shaping force of the nation's dominant music. And the sound system's most important element is the deejay, that quick-witted microphone fiend referred to as a "toaster" but known internationally as a rapper or MC. Deejays were responsible for virtual revolutions in Jamaican music, the most notable of which saw the explosion of contemporary dancehall style at the end of the 1970s.

Although Jamaican deejay evolution has been long and complex, we can trace

a certain continuum along its path. First, Count Machuki—a record selector for Kingston-based sound system Tom the Great Sebastian and later, star performer on Sir Coxsone's Downbeat—dropped hep-cat rhymes on the mic in the early 1950s in emulation of American jive radio announcers. Then, deejays like Sir Lord Comic and King Stitt made fleeting appearances on vinyl in the mid-1960s. The fluid vocal artistry of U Roy brought things to another level in 1970, as his Top 10 hits like "Wake The Town," "Rule The Nation," and "Wear You To The Ball" made the deejay a crucial star whose toasts were as important as any singer's lyrics. After U Roy came the stylistically similar Dennis Alcapone, who recorded hit singles for Studio One's Coxsone Dodd and chief rival Duke Reid, as well as upstart promoter Bunny Lee, lyrical word-smith I Roy, and innovative chanter Big Youth, who began addressing his Rastafarian faith in song. By 1973, such toasters were so popular that deejay albums became the rage in Britain.

From the mid-1970s, the most innovative and noteworthy deejays were based around Waltham Park Road, a broadly snaking thoroughfare that winds through significant ghetto communities in the musical hotbed of western Kingston. Dennis Alcapone's El Paso sound system set was based towards the road's bottom end; it helped launch the career of Dillinger (later famous for the hits "CB 200" and "Cocaine In My Brain"), who became the star deejay of Smith the Weapon in the nearby ghetto of Payne Avenue. "Dillinger used to come to my dance as a little youth from cross the lane," Alcapone recalls. "One night him ask me fe give him a talk over the mic, and I realized that he had potential."

Dillinger subsequently brought his friend Trinity to Smith the Weapon, and helped him launch a recording career with producer Joe Gibbs at Channel One Studio, where Dillinger already had a foothold. Trinity says spontaneity was the key to their successes: "It was head-top [reciting lyrics spontaneously from memory]," he emphasizes, "because we usually practice at the dancehall before going to the studio so we know exactly what we want to do. Sometimes I go to the studio and take all one cut. All deejays in them days usually imitate me and Dillinger, because me and Dillinger was the cream of the crop."





Charlie Chaplin (above), Dillinger (top right), Trinity (bottom right)



Dillinger photo by Adrian Thomas



Ranking Joe was another deejay who passed through El Paso and Smith the Weapon before he took things to another level by changing the focus of the nearby Ray Symbolic set, one of the leading roots sound systems of the late '70s. "Ray Symbolic was a champion sound," Joe notes proudly. "That sound used to play both disco music and reggae. Certain venues would request soul music, then after awhile it become strictly rub-a-dub and I became the permanent deejay."

Joe was noted for his longevity, being able to deejay all night without a break. By 1977 his engaging style, well-suited to heavy roots rhythms, brought him and selector Jah Screw to the mighty King Sturgav, the highly influential sound system established by U Roy in the adjoining district of Cockburn Pen. It was here that Joe developed the trademark "bong diddly bong" phrasing later adapted by many other toasters. "When you first start out, you never really have a style, but you have a pattern that people would know your voice tone," he explains. "But then you start working and you develop a style: in between songs, you'd come up with a little jesting and it rock the crowd, so you know that's the thing you should hold onto."

Sturgav's warm-up deejay in this phase was Charlie Chaplin, a man based in nearby Tower Hill who often brought humor into his toasts. "From school days I always give a lot of jokes and drama," he confirms. "You don't want to keep people sad at all times or keep reminding them of how dangerous life is; sometimes you have to give them a break and make them laugh." The style soon spread and deejay humor became paramount.

When Ranking Joe returned to Ray Symbolic in 1980, Charlie Chaplin's status increased on Sturgav. But Colonel Josie Wales became the set's real star. Known for his active involvement in a local street gang, the Colonel had undeniable street cred: he even took seven bullets in a politically motivated shooting in 1977. Says Wales: "I used to admire U Roy and I used to admire Claudie Massop, a gangster. I wanted to be like him, 'cause I like his style of gangsterism, badness and leadership. But people start liking me in the music, and I figure to be good is better than to be bad. My style was different because I was a rough-cut diamond and I was real with the lyrics. Most songs

I made in those times was about confrontation with me and police."

In the early 1980s, Josie Wales, Charlie Chaplin and other west Kingston deejays such as Toyan, Lui Lepke and Yellowman helped sow the seeds of the emerging dance-hall style, which swept the island in the aftermath of Bob Marley's death. The recordings they made for producer Henry "Junjo" Lawes at Channel One Studio were particularly influential.

Another important catalyst in this process—who later became a leading light in the digital insurgency—was Admiral Bailey, another versatile hard-edged deejay from Tower Hill. "I start out singing as a youth inna the church," he recalls, "and then listening to Ranking Joe start to inspire me. The next deejay who really make me decide 'This is what me want to do' was Josie Wales, who a deejay slackness and politics—Josie was a slackness deejay, but he used to make it fun."

The Admiral followed Josie's lead, making "slack" tunes celebrating sex into something funny—nothing too raw or offensive, just lyrics delivered in a style that mixed humor and raunchiness. Bailey's first taste of the limelight came on Junjo's famed Volcano set; his vocal attack brought him briefly onto Sturgav, until King Jammy stole him away to be a vocal partner to deejay Chakademus on Jammy's celebrated sound system, based a few roads farther west in Waterhouse. Bailey's ability to adapt to any rhythm quickly brought him stellar status. Meanwhile, his ease in the digital realm led his recordings for Jammy to boost the computer revolution, which was unleashed by the producer with the "Sleng Teng" rhythm in 1985.

Though Jamaican music's seen myriad changes since then, the primacy of the deejay has never wavered. Both the early chanters and their contemporaries brought innovations that still echo through the music today, and will for the foreseeable future. All hail the ever-present deejays, Jamaica's kings of the microphone.

*David Katz is author of People Funny Boy: The Genius of Lee Scratch Perry, published by Canongate (www.canongate.net) and Solid Foundation: An Oral History of Reggae, published by Bloomsbury (www.bloomsburymagazine.com)*

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# WHO IS THAT

**HIP-HOP NEEDS MORE SUPERHEROES. MF DOOM IS HAPPY TO BE MORE THAN ONE.**

**WORDS JON CARAMANICA IMAGE NAGO**

Who is MF Doom? There isn't one easy answer to that question. The man behind the mask would prefer, perhaps, to remain a cipher, and so when he settles into the studio, he picks one of a plethora of aliases—Viktor Vaughn, King Geedorah, and so on—to rhyme behind. But Doom wasn't always so enigmatic. He first gained fame as Zev Love X, the key member of the Native Tongue-era group KMD, responsible for some of the most underappreciated records of the early '90s. After losing his brother and rhyme partner Subroc to a car accident, Zev disappeared for a while, then reemerged as MF Doom, and has since released some of the most emotionally potent and sonically inventive hip-hop the underground has ever heard. Sometimes from hurt and pain comes beauty.

**XLR8R: Since when have you been adopting characters? You weren't necessarily doing that in the KMD era.**

**MF Doom:** Well, in a way I was. When you started a crew back in the days, usually a breakdancing thing, everyone gets a name, and everyone develops a style. That's when the KMD and the Zev Love X thing came about. He's a character. He's not me, per se. He's definitely a character based on me and my experiences, and experiences I know other people went through. But then as time passed, I've realized that other angles need to be covered that this one particular character can't do. He has his range, you know what I mean?

**XLR8R: Which comes first, the ideas or the characters?**

**MFD:** I get the ideas and territory first, then I need somebody to facilitate that. Then it'll start forming from there—the name, what his personality and background is gonna be like. Viktor might say something Doom would never say.

**XLR8R: Does that come from the comic book influence, which clearly informs your music and writing?**

**MFD:** When we were younger—10, 11, 12, a real impressionable age—that's when we really got into the comic thing. At the time, that was the equivalent of Playstation 2 and all these things, but it was more... you had to read. The visual aspect of it was dope, but you also had to understand where the writer was coming from. The thing I appreciated about that whole experience was the way they portrayed each character from multiple points of view. Any time you have the bad guy, they always show his struggles and what made him become that way. They'll sympathize with that guy. You can be a fan of the good guy or the bad guy and it's still all good. I adopted a lot of that, being able to show both sides of a story without necessarily leaning to one side or the other.

**XLR8R: Do you consider yourself a pretty spiritual person?**

**MFD:** Yeah, I'm always striving for perfection and studying different doctrines—Judaism, Christianity, Islam, all of them. I'm really into studying the history of man and the role that religion played in man's development. I wouldn't say it's the only thing you need,

but that's one aspect that's key to development. Once you can even deal with that realm, to look outside the planet earth, look at the origins of things that are not tangible, things you can't see or hear, once you extend your mind to reach that far, it's a step in us developing our thought processes to be able to go beyond that.

**XLR8R: Tell me about the new KMD album. Is it a modern-day perspective on the group, or more of a nostalgic trip?**

**MFD:** It's all new stuff, but it's based on that time right after we did the *Black Bastards* album. It's kind of like it takes place then, in '94. It's really like a snapshot of what actually was going on. *Black Bastards* was way darker than *Mr. Hood*. The new album, *Mentally III*, is way darker. The whole shit got crazy, it seemed like daytime and night. *Black Bastards* was sundown, and it got darker after that, so *Mentally III* is like midnight to five in the morning.

**XLR8R: Is it just you rapping on the album?**

**MFD:** I have other characters that come in and out of the storyline. One of them is like the opposite of Zev, he's on his way up. At this point on the *Mentally III* album, I'm fed up with the rap shit and ready to quit. I bump into him, and he still gung ho about the rap shit. He ain't had a record out and he still trying to come out, so he's trying to get me back into it. He's one character. The other two main characters are actually the logos from the first album and the second album (the illustrated faces from the album covers). Zev hears them speaking to him, and they rhyme too. Only he can hear them, though. He drew them up and then through his experiences he had in the industry, they started taking on a life of their own. He created these characters and they his friends now, they the only motherfuckers that he can relate to.

**XLR8R: How heavily is Subroc still with you?**

**MFD:** Every day, every minute, every moment. It's hard to explain, but he right here influencing the music. I can still hear what he would say. He's right here, it's just that his hands ain't here operating the equipment. I'm doing all the physical work.

**XLR8R: What would he think of music today?**

**MFD:** He always had another ill angle. He'd probably pop my shit right now. You think I'm catching wreck right now? That cat, forget it. I was trying to keep up with him at the time. He was about to go in a real ill direction. I always had the Doom stuff in mind, but the solo Subroc shit, oh man! I know the direction he was going—bonkers, yo. I'm just trying to keep up with him, even to this day.

Viktor Vaughn's Vaudeville Villain (*Sound-Ink*), King Geedorah's Take Me To Your Leader (*Big Dada*) and Metal Fingers Presents ... Special Herbs, 4, 5, 6 (*Shaman Work*) are in stores now. MF Doom's MMM Food (*Rhymesayers*), KMD's Mentally III (*High Times*) and the Madvillian collaboration between MF Doom and Madlib (*Stones Throw*) are due to be released in the spring.







# FREAKY DISCO

**MOST PEOPLE THINK BOOTY-BASS STAR DISCO D IS JUST A SCRATCHING, SEX-CRAZED LIBERTINE. BUT LITTLE DO THEY KNOW THAT, LIKE EPMD, HE'S ALSO STRICTLY BUSINESS.**

**WORDS SPEED DEMON IMAGE JESSICA MILLER**

Smooth operator Dave Shayman holds your hand while his alias, the ghetto-tech pimp daddy Disco D, smacks your ass. This clever lady-lover, who's recently relocated from Detroit to Brooklyn, is riding the rocket to success with a full-time job producing, remixing and DJing. Even with such a busy schedule, D manages to make time for videogames and skateboarding, as well as his two beloved vices: women and weed. On the road to graduating with distinction from University of Michigan's business school, Shayman worked the music industry and made the ladies with thick lips and killer hips beg for mercy at his national series of Booty Bar club nights. With friends and family at his side at all times and an impenetrable team consisting of a manager, agent and lawyer, Shayman is on the rise to sex-cess.

**XLR8R: What kind of women do you dig?**

**Disco D:** What really attracts me is drive. I want a girl who's just as driven and motivated as me. I have yet to really be with someone whose drive comes close to meeting mine. I know they're out there, though. I really don't like leeches. Get your own shit and then holla!

**XLR8R: What keeps you busy besides your music career?**

**DD:** I do marketing and new business development for Expansion Team—we do music for film, TV, videogames, commercials, etc.

**XLR8R: What gets your creative juices flowing?**

**DD:** I come up with my best basslines in the shower. Sometimes I run out to the studio in a towel and stay there all day, and then wonder why I'm still naked at 8 pm when I woke up at 10 am.

**XLR8R: How often do you get dirty-dog drunk when you produce?**

**DD:** Well, you won't find me liquored in the studio, but the weed often comes out to help me get over writer's block. In fact, it's funny: sometimes I think I can tell what I did stoned and what I did sober. Like Da Brat's "Boom" was a stoned remix, and Lords of Acid's "Pussy" was a sober one!

**XLR8R: Tell us about your scratching skills. When are you going to show up at DMC competitions?**

**DD:** I actually learned on some belt drives. I would put a record on one side and just do repetitive eighth-note and sixteenth-note patterns for hours. That's how I got the quickness. In terms of DMC, there was a point in time where I wanted to do it, but now it's way too technical and there isn't much funk in it anymore. Plus, the kids that do that practice forever just to do six minutes! I got too much to do.

I do have some ill DMC-style technical juggles with some tracks no one would expect, but they aren't danceable enough for me to do them at a regular show.

**XLR8R: Break down a live-gig experience that got a rush out of you.**

**DD:** The Booty Shakin' Juke-A-Thon contest at Booty Bar is always insanity. In terms of an individual experience, let's just say I had a great time in Portland recently when two lovely ladies asked if I wanted to go to the 24-hour pancake spot.

**XLR8R: What could one expect at this Booty Bar night you fondly speak of?**

**DD:** Pure ghetto-tech, ghetto house and Miami bass the way it was meant to be played—plenty of booze, beer and booty. You leave a Booty Bar event sweaty, smiling and horny as a muthafucka. If you can't get laid at a Booty Bar event, you shouldn't be going to one in the first place!

**XLR8R: What's the controversy that stirs up trouble in your life?**

**DD:** My biggest drama is usually "what's next"? I try to think ten steps ahead, and sometimes that gives me a headache!

**XLR8R: Who do you have to thank for what you got?**

**DD:** My fam and friends for sticking with me—and also my "big brothers" Aaron Deakins, who taught me how to spin, and Joe Hahn, who taught me that I could make money at it.

**XLR8R: What famous producers do you respect?**

**DD:** In terms of mainstream stuff, I love Ludacris and Twista. Otherwise, I love these crazy cats from Chicago called Looney Bin. I just finished doing a dancehall remix for Pharrell from The Neptunes, with Max Glazer and Cypha Sounds from NYC. It features Vybz Kartel and Wayne Marshall, who I think are the hottest up-and-comers in the dancehall world.

**XLR8R: What advice do you have for people in the music business?**

**DD:** Be careful, get a good lawyer, and if it looks like a good deal, it probably isn't, and if it looks like a bad deal, it's probably a contract for slave labor.

**XLR8R: If you could pull off a crazy stunt without getting busted, what would it be?**

**DD:** Spinning a private party in Jenna Bush's bedroom!

A Night at the Booty Bar is out now on Tommy Boy Records. [www.bootybar.biz](http://www.bootybar.biz)



# WOLFMAN JACK



**RICARDO VILLALOBOS SPEARHEADS CHILEAN-GERMAN TECHNO FUSION.**

**WORDS PHILIP SHERBURNE IMAGE MARYSE LARIVIÈRE**

DJs love to describe their craft as a form of storytelling, but few electronic tracks have much to say on their own. Crafted in solitude, and indebted more to the requirements of genre and the vagaries of software than to any proper narrative drive, house and techno seem to take much of their meaning *ex post facto* from the world into which they emerge.

Ricardo Villalobos's "Easy Lee" has certainly spun a tale or two since it emerged last fall as the lead track off his debut album, *Alcachofa*. Showcased by Richie Hawtin at 2003's MUTEK festival and already anthologized in several new mix CDs (including Michael Mayer's *Fabric 13*), the brooding, conga-flecked track quickly became one of the most talked-about techno tunes of 2003. A minor superstar in Europe thanks to his records for Perlon and Playhouse, frequent touring, and an Ibiza residency alongside Sven Väth, Villalobos has until now been relatively unknown Stateside. But "Easy Lee" is arguably responsible for raising his profile here amongst a growing legion of fans, critics and media elite (at least one agency has already looked into licensing Villalobos's tracks for television).

Beyond its immediately appealing, bittersweet sonics, "Easy Lee" might owe its success to the fact that it's one of those rare tracks that does have a story to tell, even if it's not readily apparent. "It's the oldest song on the album," explains Villalobos via mobile phone from a car somewhere in the former East Germany. (Spending most of his time on the road or in the studio, Villalobos, who doesn't tend to return e-mails, is notoriously difficult to reach.) Three years ago, Villalobos, Martin Schopf (a.k.a. Dandy Jack) and Lucien Nicolet (a.k.a. Luciano) had been celebrating in the garden at Schopf's mother's house, "completely drunk," trying out Villalobos's Nord Lead. "I was playing around with the vocoder, completely spontaneously," explains Villalobos, "and this became the melody of 'Easy Lee.' It was strange—it was the last moments of being in this house, because the house was sold, and everything changed after that. We knew were about to lose this paradise. It was a very sad thing and a very happy thing, all at once."

While Villalobos's work is often cited for its rhythmic complexity, that emotional ambivalence is what gives it its particular charge. "It's something you find a lot in Latin American music," he explains. "Life is like that in Chile. It's always between happiness and sadness. The people there have so many reasons to be sad, but it's like, 'I have plenty of time to be sad when I'm dead!'"

Villalobos was born in Chile in 1970 to a Chilean father and a German mother. When General Augusto Pinochet overthrew the democratic government of Salvador Allende in 1973, Villalobos's family, like many leftists, moderates and intellectuals, found itself at risk. Villalobos fled to Germany with his sister and mother almost immediately; they were joined later by his father, who had gone underground before finding protection at Chile's German embassy.

"One part of my life was the Chilean life—Chilean culture and music and the Spanish language," says Villalobos, "and the other part was the German world." This dual existence directly affected his musical upbringing. From an early age, Villalobos found himself taking part in all-night drum sessions where exiles would drink *pisco* and keep alive the beat of the mother country.

At 11, a visiting musician presented Villalobos with a conga drum; four years later, he trained in samba schools while visiting Brazil, and by 18 he was studying percussion in Cuba. At the same time, Villalobos had begun to dabble in electronic music, inspired in part by Depeche Mode, an act he spent several years following around Europe (he estimates he saw the group some three dozen times).

Villalobos's own musical signature lies at the unlikely intersection between these two styles. Afro-Brazilian percussion is at the heart of his music—even on his earlier, more straightforwardly minimalist releases, where synthetic sounds replace traditional drum samples, his sidwinding rhythms take more from hand drumming's rippling flow than from techno's steadier chug. And on *Alcachofa*, Afro-Brazilian drum sounds assume prominence in the mix: beneath a pixel-spray of digital detritus, "Theogenese" and "Y.G.H." are studded with hiccupping drums, while "Fool Garden (Black Conga)," for all its silicon embossing, wouldn't be out of place in a Body & Soul set.

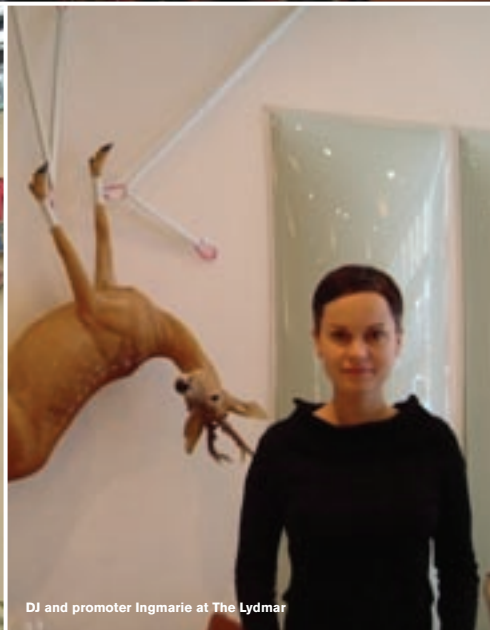
Villalobos cites his drumming as a direct influence on his production style. "You learn to have your role. You're doing only one thing, but you have to respect your role. When you play with a lot of drummers, you notice immediately if there is one drummer doing too much. Everybody learns the role of a certain instrument in a certain moment. I think for programming this is really essential knowledge."

Villalobos is one of a select group of producers that's pushing the very form of house and techno forward. As a performer, Villalobos has played with Dandy Jack, Luciano, Atom Heart and the "supergroup" Narod Niki, helping develop the idea of collaborative, improvised techno. In turn, these methods have fueled his own compositions, which explode the linear logic of more conventional dance music.

"What You Say Is More Than I Can Say," for instance, seems like a miniature DJ set in its own right, folding over and doubling back upon a shifting set of themes. "It's really important to me to make long tracks," he admits. "I hate to compress everything into four minutes. You have the beginning story, then you have a break, and then a bridge, and then you have a completely different song. If there is a track you really love, you have to invent something—a certain break, a certain change—that makes you think, 'Wow, what's happening now?' You listen one time, and you know forever that this is the track."

For more, check out [www.mad-net.de/ongaku/index.html](http://www.mad-net.de/ongaku/index.html) or [www.neuton.de](http://www.neuton.de)





# NORTHERN SOUL

UNDERNEATH STOCKHOLM'S CHILLY, IKEA-DESIGNED EXTERIOR LIES A CITY FULL OF FUNK.

WORDS AND IMAGES VIVIAN HOST

Stockholm is an icy city, particularly in winter, when brutal winds blow off the North Sea and chill this fjord-laden metropolis to its very core. But there's plenty of funk, soul and vodka here to heat up even the coldest night. While Southern Sweden's Göthenburg (alias Gonyburg) is better known for laid-back broken-beat vibes, boasting artists such as Andreas Saag (Swell Sessions, Stateless), Quant and Plej, Stockholm residents proudly display a love for '70s disco and soul that's far outlasted Abba's popularity.

It's surprising to hear so many clubs in town playing American soul and hip-hop, especially since the rest of the world sees Stockholm as a techno mecca. The phone book boasts some of the top names in banging electronic machine-blast, including **Cari Lekebusch**, **Joel Mull**, **Adam Beyer** (Loop Records), **Jasper Dahlbeck**, **Aril Brikha**, Mitek's **Sophie Rimheden**, Mikael Persson's **G-Force** label and **Hakan Lidbo** and his **Container** imprint. Still, Brikha says there are no real techno clubs within Stockholm's city limits. "A few years ago, we had the Rave Commission, a division of the police who shut down all the outlaw parties," he explains. Also, to sell alcohol here you also have to sell food, which makes it difficult for people to open clubs."

Your best bet for hard 4/4s is the banging basement of the **Berns** nightclub, a three-floor megalith boasting a fabulous jigggy hip-hop room, mainstream house, and more leftfield flavors underground. Berns is adjacent to the swank boutique hotel of the same name, making its rooms within perfect staggering distance if you can afford 2,400 Kronors (about US\$320) per night. Another hotel that doubles as a venue is the **Lydmar**, arguably one of the hippest locations in Europe. The lobby has hosted free performances and DJ sets from the likes of Isaac Hayes, Roy Ayers, Ulrich Schnauss and Photek for the price of a cocktail—but show up looking like a \*wallpaper model, or you may not get in.

In fact, Stockholm is definitely the place to pack your finest attire. Many of the clubs centrally located around the Kungsträdgården and T-Centralen subway stops feature one or two burly bouncers outside, and they're just as keen to check your ID as to make sure you're wearing the right fashion labels. Clubs like indie rock venue **Sturehof** and high-end hip-hop joint **East** (which also boasts a terrific Asian restaurant) may require you to say you're over 23 years old to gain entrance, but once you're inside, there's little attitude. If you find yourself all dressed up with nowhere to go, the **Nordic Sea Hotel**

boasts **Absolut Vodka's Ice Bar**, an entire frozen room where cocktails are served out of a plank of imported ice, and visitors are given silver parkas and gloves before entering.

In the southern part of the city, **Södermalm**, downtown's landscape of rich Eurotrash princes in prep-school coats fades away into used record stores, home-spun house clubs and well-worn cafes where your Nike Dunks will feel quite at home. **Mosebacke**, a homey, wooden basement, is the city's oldest jazz club, and also hosts **Mad Mats's** bi-weekly **Raw Fusion** night. Mats, who runs an excellent broken/nu-jazz/soul label of the same name, brings in guests from Theo Parrish to Carl Craig to Seiji for an up-for-it crowd that gets progressively friendlier—and pushier—as they down beer after beer. Around the corner is live-act venue **Mondo**, where Saturday night is the domain of **Guidelines**, a club that chronicles the history of house from acid to present-day deep stuff; you may catch local house DJ/producer **Tony Senghore** around here. **DB Club** throws regular drum & bass events around the city with international talent and locals like **Blito**, **Yellow** and **Cicci Moon** playing—check [db.ub.nu](http://db.ub.nu) for the latest.

Most clubs close around two or three AM so you'll want to start your drinking early. Stockholm's bars are possibly more interesting places to soak up the culture than its clubs. Around the Udenplan subway stop, **Tranan**, a vibey DJ bar, and **Olssons Skor** (say "ool-sohn skool"), a shoe store converted into an electrorock hideout, are guaranteed good times. Other good bars include the eclectic **Rangus Tangus**, bossanova and techno outpost **Vassa Eggen**, laidback cocktail bar **Grodan**, and jazz club **Fashing**. Most of these places have good restaurants attached, so there's plenty of time to grab some salmon, potatoes and crisp bread in between cocktails.

Finally, you should be able to drag yourself out of bed for shopping—record shopping, that is. Stockholm's clothing stores don't have much you won't find in the rest of Europe for cheaper—with the exception of avant-garde Le Shop, the flagship store of local brand We, and Sneakers & Stuff, which caters to limited edition sneaker fetishists. Better to spend all your money on hard to find soul, funk and house at **Record Mania**, **Snickars Records** and **Fade**.

Find more Swedish excitement at [www.stockholmnew.com](http://www.stockholmnew.com), [www.rawfusion.se](http://www.rawfusion.se) and [www.bomben.se](http://www.bomben.se).





# THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

THE UNREAL BECOMES REEL WHEN TECHNOLOGY RUNS AMOK. THE WORLD OF DIGITAL VIDEO IS THE LATEST FRONTIER IN ARTISTIC ADVANCEMENT, AN AUTONOMOUS ZONE WHERE TRADITIONAL COMMERCIAL FILM AND MUSIC VIDEO METHODS ARE HACKED TO SHREDS. TWO GERMANS AND TWO AMERICANS EXEMPLIFY THIS RENEGADE MOVEMENT, PUSHING MUSIC VIDEO DIRECTION BEYOND THE AVERAGE. WORDS TOMAS AND VIVIAN HOST

Postal Service's "The District Sleeps Alone Tonight" (Rob Feng)

## ROB FENG

WORK INCLUDES VIDEOS FOR POSTAL SERVICE AND CLEARLAKE.

**XLR8R:** What have you been listening to lately?

**Rob Feng:** The Books, Broken Social Scene, the new Trans Am album, anything and everything from Morr Music.

**XLR8R:** Talk about your last few projects, videos or otherwise.

**RF:** [In the video for] the Postal Service's "The District Sleeps Alone Tonight," a young woman sleeps in her bed while dreams of her friends and past lovers manifest themselves as holograms and attempt to interact with her. In [the treatment for] Clearlake's "Almost the Same" two completely different people (one boy, one girl) start their days at opposite ends of town and gradually become more similar as the day progresses until they finally meet up and have become essentially the same.

**XLR8R:** What was your concept for the Postal Service video and where were you when you came up with it?

**RF:** It had been a few weeks into the treatment phase and we were ramping up for a completely different video idea—think *The Neverending Story* meets Rapunzel told in a very heavy illustrative style—when suddenly all of our favors fell through. We were sitting on the floor in our office, freaking out, [and the idea] just randomly came into our heads. Because of all the help we got from our friends, we were able to put the thing together in two weeks. I got a couple of new gray hairs from it.

**XLR8R:** What's your favorite project that you've done and what was the hardest part about it?

**RF:** [My favorite video was] "The District Sleeps Alone Tonight." The most challenging aspect was choreographing the interactions between our actors and holograms.

**XLR8R:** How important is it to have a hot girl in a music video? Who's your favorite video babe?

**RF:** Hot girls...That's a loaded question. [But] I don't think we would complain if we were approached to do a remake of George Michael's "Freedom 90."

**XLR8R:** What's the most interesting thing happening in video right now?

**RF:** Michel Gondry and the return of in-camera effects.

**XLR8R:** What decade or era is visually inspiring you at the moment?

**RF:** Not the '80s...anymore.

**XLR8R:** What's your favorite music video?

**RF:** A-Ha's "Take On Me."

[www.brandnewschool.com](http://www.brandnewschool.com)





The Faint's "Agenda Suicide" (Matt Fraction/MK12)

## MATT FRACTION/MK12

WORK INCLUDES VIDEOS FOR HOT HOT HEAT AND THE FAINT.

### **XLR8R:** What have you been listening to lately?

**Matt Fraction:** A lot of Clutch—it's good music to listen to when you need to keep your head down and get work done. And Björk mixed up with some really early Billy Bragg, which is some unholy combination but it makes me think of winter and warm blankets and snowflakes that look like TV static.

### **XLR8R:** Talk about your last few projects, videos or otherwise.

**MF:** I did two versions of a fall/winter branding spot for Best Buy, following people in and out of a Best Buy, noodling around with various electronics and whatnots. They should start airing soon. There were two spots for Adidas, featuring a ghostly T-Mac doing what he does—also due on-air soon. [Then, there were] six 10-second logo ID spots for Comedy Central—one had a ninja in a grocery store, one had Tibetan monks racing go-carts.

### **XLR8R:** What's your favorite project that you've done and what was the hardest part about it?

**MF:** I bet everyone in the studio would have a different answer for this, but here's mine: probably one of our short films *Infinity* or *Man of Action!*. *Infinity* was such a dense, complicated notion and I think we were able to execute something completely strange, but still with a kind of clarity to it. *Man of Action!* was our first long narrative, and I have a lot of great affection for the conditions under which it was made.

### **XLR8R:** How important is it to have a hot girl in a music video? Who's your favorite video babe?

**MF:** If you got nothin' else goin' on for you, then a video babe is crucial. Otherwise, the teenagers, they won't care.

### **XLR8R:** What do you think is the most interesting thing happening in video right now?

**MF:** Palm Pictures' *Director's Series* DVD collection was fantastic. That some directors and some videos are being treated with a filmic austerity and importance rather than as disposable commercials is pretty great.

### **XLR8R:** What decade or era is visually inspiring you at the moment?

**MF:** Late '60s/early '70s Italian trash cinema.

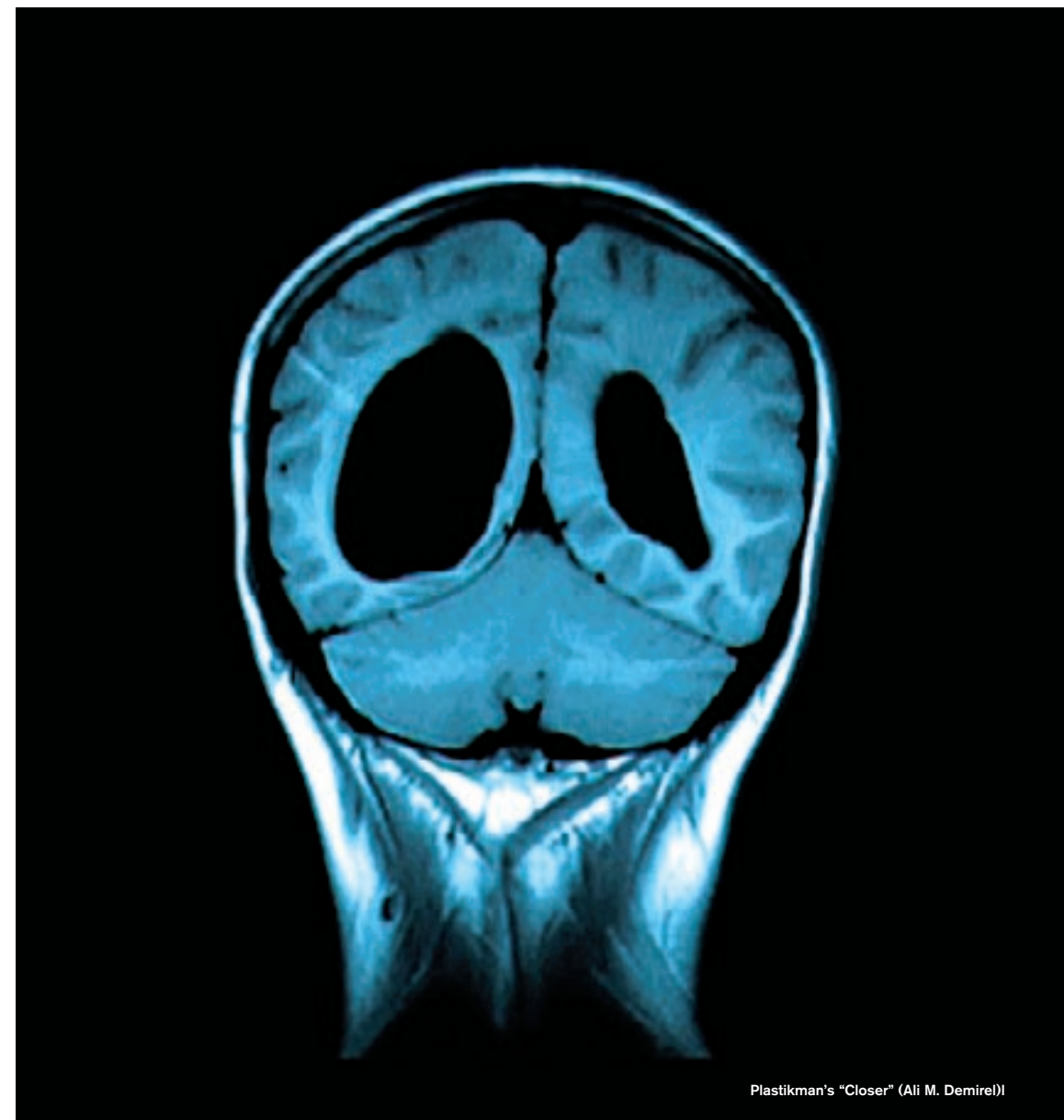
### **XLR8R:** What's your favorite music video?

**MF:** Michel Gondry's "Sugar Water" for Cibo Matto.

### **XLR8R:** How is it different to be a director that works in Kansas City, rather than LA or New York?

**MF:** We're freed up from a lot of the complications and trends that being on either coast would encourage. We've been able to develop a visual and mental style by being inside of our little bubble. Being in NYC or LA, you eat, breathe and sleep the industry, and who's doing what and how. It gets tough to follow your instincts. And, shit, it's only a couple hours by plane in either direction, so it's not like we're in a Himalayan mountain base or anything. Man, I wish we had a Himalayan mountain base.

[www.mk12.com](http://www.mk12.com)



Plastikman's "Closer" (Ali M. Demirel)

## ALI M. DEMIREL

WORK INCLUDES VIDEOS FOR PLASTIKMAN AND CAPTAIN COMATOSE.

### **XLR8R:** What have you been listening to lately?

**Ali M. Demirel:** Plastikman, Ryoji Ikeda, T.Raumschmiere and other Shitkatapult releases, Miss Kittin, Tiga, Front Line Assembly, Tool.

### **XLR8R:** Talk about your last few projects, videos or otherwise.

**AMD:** [I've done] a video for the Plastikman single "Disconnect," "\$100," a video for the single from Captain Comatose; and "The Pond," an experimental video exhibited at European Media Arts Festival.

### **XLR8R:** How important is it to have a hot girl in a music video? Who's your favorite video babe?

**AMD:** I haven't had a babe in any of my videos so far. My favorite would be a porn star.

### **XLR8R:** What do you think is the most interesting thing happening in video right now?

**AMD:** Intelligent software: we'll no longer edit videos but program them.

### **XLR8R:** What decade or era is visually inspiring you at the moment?

**AMD:** '70s video art.

### **XLR8R:** What's your favorite music video?

**AMD:** "Noisefields" by The Vasulkas.

### **XLR8R:** In the video for Plastikman's "Closer" what was the biggest technical obstacle to creating the look you wanted?

**AMD:** Creating animations that would look organic.

[www.magnetmus.net](http://www.magnetmus.net)





Schneider TM's "Reality Check" (Uwe Flade)

## UWE FLADE

WORK INCLUDES VIDEOS FOR SQUARE ONE AND SCHNEIDER TM.

### **XLR8R: What have you been listening to lately?**

**Uwe Flade:** Black Rebel Motorcycle Club, International Noise Conspiracy, The Hives, Zoot Woman, DJ Hell.

### **XLR8R: Talk about your last few projects, videos or otherwise.**

**UF:** All of them are music videos: Dave Gahan's "Bottle Living," a challenging combination of live stuff and animation; Sportfreunde Stiller's "Ans Ende Denken Wir Zuletz"—they're an upcoming German pop band; and Extremo's "Küss Mich," which we shot in an unused old East German jail in Berlin. Two of the band members were locked up there for some weeks in the '80s, accused of minor political crimes.

### **XLR8R: What's your favorite project that you've done and what was the hardest part about it?**

**UF:** The Schneider TM video that was shot at the university I attended in Bochum, Germany, in an ugly "learn-factory" (lecture hall) made of stone and glass. It was my aesthetic revenge. I won the Audience Award at the German Backup Festival and lots of reactions from all over the world.

### **XLR8R: Who's your favorite video babe?**

**UF:** I like Beyoncé. She's really working hard in her videos—full body contact with the mud and still looking extremely sexy.

### **XLR8R: What's the most interesting thing happening in video right now?**

**UF:** The combination of digital effects with live shot material. Post-production can be done at home with software like After Effects, Maya or Cinema 3D. This is unleashing new creativity.

### **XLR8R: What decade or era is visually inspiring you at the moment?**

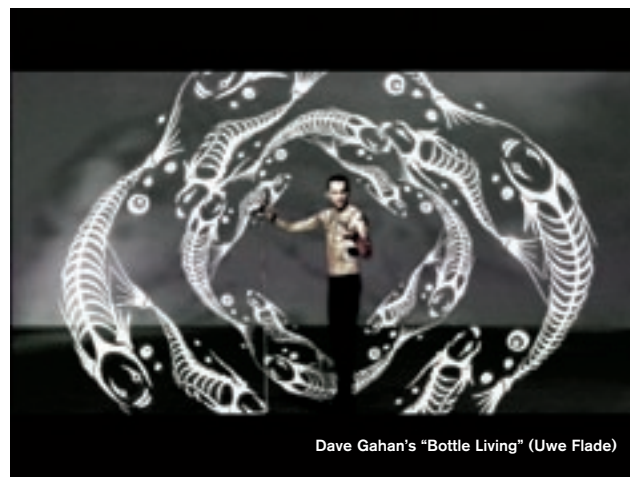
**UF:** It changes all the time. Inspiring references come from all eras.

### **XLR8R: What's your favorite music video?**

**UF:** "Heart Shaped Box" by Nirvana.

[www.uweflade.de](http://www.uweflade.de)

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Dave Gahan's "Bottle Living" (Uwe Flade)

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Dave Corpe



# XL REVIEWS 01.04

Stasis

# Savath & Savalas

## Apropa't

In stores January 27th, 2004



**SUBURBAN KNIGHT MY SOL DARK DIRECTION**  
**STASIS PAST MOVEMENTS**  
**ROBERT HOOD WIRE TO WIRE**  
 Peacefrog/UK/CD



From its origins 10 years ago, the UK's Peacefrog label—probably named after a Doors song of the same name—has charted a course through the darker, deeper side of techno. Starting with singles from Pete the Lodger (a.k.a. Peacefrog label owner Pete Hutchinson and his brother, Bill), Luke Slater, and DBX, over the next decade the label put its imprimatur on classic albums from Slater's Planetary Assault Systems, Moodymann, and Robert Hood. Now, a trio of recent releases—Hood's new *Wire to Wire*, Stasis's 10-year compendium *Past Movements*, and Suburban Knight's *My Sol Dark Direction* (released in April, but newly available in the US)—charts the progression of the Detroit sound as it has developed both at home and abroad.



Underground Resistance's James Pennington got his start on Transmat in 1989 with "The Groove," and a few years later collaborated with Inner City on "Big Fun." From the very first track, "Shape Shifter"—which opens with a morbid synth figure and a Drexciya-like spoken refrain—to the title, *My Sol Dark Direction* conjures equal parts light and shadow, careening across a wrecked landscape of jagged syncopations, jutting rhythmic fragments, and cool melodic breezes. This is Motor City soul in all its glory, from 1994's "Midnight Sunshine" to the almost freestyle-sounding "Niagara Falls." What's most surprising is how Pennington links classic Detroit sounds to more Continental movements. "Collaboration Alpha," for instance, gestures to Kompakt's Superpitcher by way of

tumescent arpeggios that come sailing out of the mix.

Another Detroit hero, Rob Hood, has had a busy few years, recording three albums for Peacefrog and another as Monobox for Parisian label Logistic. *Wire to Wire* is caught on the cusp between his Monobox minimalism and the high-intensity urges of last year's *Art of War*. After a frilly opening recalling the cool patterns of Detroit Escalator Company's synths, and a swinging downtempo tune in the vein of Urban Tribe's dusted funk, Hood moves into action with precision rhythms over Basic Channel-style dub washes ("Upon a Millennial Moment"). "Interior Suspect" springs from Reichian piano layers into the most energetic bassline techno's produced in years; "Fragile Minds" explores laidback house cut with an unmistakably techno-jazz edge; and the closing, "Aural 512," hints at the Latin quirk of Lucien Nicolet—who, as it turns out, will be bringing his signature Swiss-Chilean techno to Peacefrog in 2004.

Stasis's voluminous *Past Movements* collects a decade of tunes that producer Steve Pickton has released—under a handful of names, including Phenomyna and Paul W. Teebroke—on labels like B12 and Kirk Degiorgio's ART. Disc one of the double-CD set (also available on triple vinyl) kicks off with 1993's keening "Point of No Return"—a fitting title for the tune, which plunged jittery 808 patterns into a subzero bath of icy pads and basslines stiffening with rigor mortis. At the heart of the stilling pulse there's a supple fire that continues through the album, as Pickton explores delicate ambient techno, grinding electro-funk, and reconfigured tribal drumming that prefigures broken beat's lurch by a number of years. Above all, Pickton's sound is a liquid one, and this incredible album lets listeners drink deeply. *Philip Sherburne*

[www.peacefrog.com](http://www.peacefrog.com)





The Books

**THE BOOKS THE LEMON OF PINK** *Tomlab/GER/CD*

Tucked away in Massachusetts, the Books wholly committed themselves to the possibilities of symbiotic relationships: silence/sound, nature/technology, up/down. Then they cracked open their laptops with garden gloves and spade and, with Richard Thompson strumming softly in one corner and Arvo Pärt smiling devilishly in the other, they released this beautiful electro-folk tangle into the world. Where most folktronicists focus on Shambhali Czukay-meets-Premier drum tracks, The Books weaves an Indra's net of intricacies with shrewd attention to their palette of sound. Guitars nebulously mutate onto themselves; the comfortably familiar is spliced, diced and reintroduced; the human voice sounds so new and raw; and the *Lemon Of Pink* becomes an equation that just seems so right. *Brion Paul*



**2MEX SWEAT LODGE INFINITE** *Temporary Whatever/US/CD*

A mainstay in LA's fecund hip-hop underground for the last decade, Alejandro Ocana has lit up records by the Visionaries, Mindclouders and Of Mexican Descent. But his debut as 2Mex may be his most incendiary work yet. From the militant first track, "Obey," with its grandiose horn stabs, scratches from Breakstra's Mixmaster Wolf, and hypnotic organ riff, 2Mex thrusts you into the apocalyptic funkiness and exhilarating existentialism of golden-era crews like Public Enemy, X Clan and Poor Righteous Teachers. With elevated contributions from various Darkleaf and Shapeshifters cohorts, *Sweat Lodge Infinite* ought to attract more heads to 2Mex's piquantly eccentric gifts. *Dave Segal*

**ABYSSINIA INFINITE ZION ROOTS** *Network/US/CD*

To chart the territory of *Zion Roots*, the new collaboration between über-underground world fusionist Bill Laswell and Ethiopian singer Ejigayehu "Gigi" Shibabaw, start with the voice. Gigi's vocals bubble and gush like water through a sparse, stony creek bed, meandering around reedy percussion arrangements, slithering accordion riffs and lone bamboo flutes. Her music journeys from the shores of the ancient Nile to the metropolitan future of Laswell's New York by way of 10 heart-rending songs that blend Amharic liturgical and folk sounds with the occasional organic 4/4 house rhythm. What to say about Gigi's *Roots*? Let it flow. *Tomás*



**ADVENTURE TIME DREAMS OF WATER THEMES** *Plug Research/US/CD*

Adventure Time will get you wet. The new amphibious vehicle from Daedelus and Frosty is draped in an aqueous motif for no apparent reason other than being sublimely creative. With *Dreams of Water Themes*, the Dublab colleagues

have produced a record both beautiful and adventurous—as the title suggests, the album offers no real "songs" in the sense of structure or pattern. Rather, the music drifts freely and elegantly through the undocumented regions of hip-hop, free jazz and glitch pop. Fluid and feel-good, *Dreams* is another example of how mesmerizing these well-traveled producers can be. *Carleton Curtis*

**AGF WESTERNIZATION COMPLETED** *Orthlorng Musork/US/CD*

Antye Greie-Fuchs halts midway through this CD to ask you, "Does this fit into theory? Does it mean anything?" Good question. Either *Westernization Completed* is this electronic poet's dramatization of her transition from a regimented East German childhood into the fragmented Western world or it's just AGF whispering postmodern gobbledeygook while dicking around on a laptop. Conceptual confusion aside, *Westernization...* is a glitch-dub masterpiece, where beats and DSP loops deftly imitate brain synapses firing—forgetting and then recalling the sudden thoughts. AGF's husband Vladislav Delay influenced the clean, ear-pricking sound, which is a relief, given the garbage disposal nightmare that was her last album. Now, if only she would spell-check her "glitchy" liner notes. *Cameron Macdonald*

**AIR TALKIE WALKIE** *Virgin/UK/CD*

Air's comeback is an understated and elegant travelogue that shows both where they've been and where they plan on taking us. *Talkie Walkie* recalls the freshness of *Premiers Symptomes* (with it's *Emmanuelle*-in-space production and soft-core innocence) and incorporates the charming choruses that the band unearthed on *Moon Safari*. Gone is all that Pink Floyd grandeur (*Dark Side* via *Virgin Suicides*), but not forgotten is the technical gloom Air has acquired from Radiohead. They don't glitch out, though, choosing instead to romance the listener through whistles, lush string arrangements (from Serge Gainsbourg's man Michel Colobier), and Western guitars. With *Talkie Walkie*, Air achieves the perfect balance between song and soundtrack, perhaps creating the next French pop classic. *Daniel Siwek*



**THE ALUMINUM GROUP MOREHAPPYNESS** *Wishing Tree/US/CD*

Like vanilla Häagen-Dazs, the Aluminum Group plays rich, creamy, no-nonsense pop music. Regardless of the premium brand, it's still vanilla—and you're invariably left craving a sprinkle or two. *Morehappiness*, the Aluminum Group's latest, is more blandness from the brothers Navin: neatly arranged milieus of gliding synth and boy/boy harmonizing with impotent cameos from Tortoise and Sea & Cake. The album has an understated quality reminiscent of the Eames furniture collection after which they're named, but overall *Morehappiness* evokes little emotion. It's a good thing the Navins are gay, 'cause they'll never get any pussy making this stuff. *Carleton Curtis*

**AQUASKY VS. MASTERBLASTER STAYFRESH** *Shadow Cryptic/UK/2xCD*

Recording under their clever Aquasky vs. Masterblaster moniker, the boys from Bournemouth continue their nu-skoool breaks takeover, linking up with Moving Shadow's newly minted imprint for their second full-length foray into the genre. Firmly set on destroying the dancefloor, the crew keeps things jumping with nasty gems like "Dominatrix," "Fairlite" and the four-on-the-floor shakedown, "Seville," which is sure to have the kids going backwild. While Daddy Freddy and Ragga Twins provide lyrical assistance on the reggae-tinged "War" and "Dem No No We," the norm is hi-octane, sample-driven funk centered on fat breakbeats and even fatter basslines. It's best to warn the neighbors before you slot this one in the stereo. *Chris Muniz*

**CALIFONE HERON KING BLUES** *Thrill Jockey/US/CD*

After realizing that a recurring dream involving an avian Sasquatch paralleled an event of a British-Roman war, Califone's Tim Rutili decided to pay tribute to his nighttime visions with *Heron King Blues*. The album borrows equally from blues, folk, acoustic, country and rock, quietly mashing these lush elements together into rich sonic morsels. Rutili's mesmerizing pieces are reminiscent of the music of '60s cult figure Nick Drake: breathy vocals guide hazy atmospheres on "Sawsooth Sung," while "Lion & Bee"'s spare guitar riffs and resonant chords will haunt you beyond the waking hours. *Janet Tzou*

**DERRICK CARTER POVERTY DELUXE: TONE THEORY VS. ONEIRO** *Icon/US/CD*

Derrick Carter is a genius—no, the *master*—of Chicago house, so it hurts when he makes a commercial-sounding album. We want to like *Poverty Deluxe*, so we listen hard for his signature edge, waiting for syncopated beats to go on an acid flashback ("My Tiger is Satiated"), and Starship Troopers to wrest control of the bongo drums with their rayguns ("The Stalker"). But we can't shake the feeling that the best part of this LP is the Eddie Murphy sample in the opening track. Go listen to *Square dancing in a Roundhouse*, and pretend this never happened. *Anna Balkrishna*

**CASIOTONE FOR THE PAINFULLY ALONE TWINKLE ECHO** *Tomlab/GER/CD*

San Francisco's Casiotone adopts the same tone of confessional melancholy that made the Postal Service's debut so gripping. And even though *Twinkle Echo* is a rawer and less graceful record than *Give Up*, it *does* have similar charms, with noisy, glitch-pop backings tenderly touched by Owen Ashworth's emotronic vocals, which are alternately heartwarming and heartbreaking. If you like long road-trips, cardigans, late-night phone calls, the Smiths and teen angst, then *Twinkle Echo* will play like a 30-minute love letter straight to your soul. *Vivian Host*

**CEx MARYLAND MANSIONS** *Jade Tree/US/CD*

On his second album of 2003 (his fifth overall), prolific 22-year-old MC/bedroom beatcrafter Rryan Kidwell delivers his most focused yet fractured portrait to date. While his last full-length, *Being Ridden*, wavered between elliptical indieisms and folk-flecked funk, *Maryland Mansions* finds formerly schizophrenic production settled into a nigh-goth grind. Mentally, Cex comes across decisively unsettled and claustrophobically insecure. Over the caustic clank and syrupy creep of industrialist (owing a noticeable debt to NIN and Skinny Puppy), Cex rends himself in anguished howls and desperate whispers. The clamor and clamber hits with a resounding rattling, making for an album that is far more cast iron skillet than Teflon-coated. Once merely a gangly goofball amongst the IDMminent, Cex is now all the more impressive for being unafraid to wrestle with his angst candidly, if not gracefully. *Tony Ware*

**CHICAGO UNDERGROUND TRIO SLON** *Thrill Jockey/US/CD*

Cornetist Rob Mazurek's Chicago Underground group has assembled a compelling post-bop canon while fluctuating between anything from a duo to an orchestra. The Trio, rounded out by bassist Noel Kupersmith and drummer Chad Taylor, is where he sounds most at home. Mazurek nimbly hops from beat to beat on "Shoe Lace," evoking cornet legend Don Cherry's duels with Billy Higgins. *Slon* is no musty throwback, though; while the menacing drones of "Kite" protest too much (and leave Mazurek sounding tentative), Taylor's rolling percussion exhibits touches of both jungle and Elvin Jones, and the band's stretches of electronica sound admirably unforced. *Rob Geary*

**CHOPS VIRTUOSITY**

*Vocab-Good Vibe/US/CD*

With a title this ballsy, sample-shunning Chops's new album better be good—and it is. Bred on a strict diet of Philly soul, the Mountain Brothers' boardsman reaches out to some big names, coaxing energetic verses from Planet Asia on the cartoonish "Niggarachi" and Kanye West on the dainty, piano-dappled "Changing Lines." Indeed, Chops loves his keys, whether employing them as melodic engine or atmospheric accentuation. But when he grips the mic on "U Know Who It Is," the Magnificent Butcher flexes a vocal style far less impressive than his beatmaking skills. Earth to all MCs: enough with the similes! *Martin Turenne*

**COLLEEN EVERYONE ALIVE WANTS ANSWERS** *Leaf/UK/CD*

Just barely open your eyes and look through the lashes. The world becomes a beautiful, blurry place. Points of light take on newly transformed life as kaleidoscopic pinwheels. Colleen lives within this wistful space. Her faint sounds float just on the horizon of consciousness. Melodies hover softly and shift with subtle grace into wholly transformed figures. *Everyone Alive Wants Answers* is an album that seems to barely exist, yet shines with sophisticated, natural beauty. It is a garden in bloom with wispy guitar strings and shadowy undercurrents. Colleen's fragile glances of dewy dreams will wrap you in their mesmerizing tendrils. *frosty*



**DA LATA SERIOUS** *Palm Beats/UK/CD*

Borrowing influences and choice collaborators from around the world—including Malian singer Mamani Keita, Senegalese nightingale Baaba Maal, and British soul singer Jhelisa Anderson—*Serious* visits more foreign waters than a cruise ship. And though it's a painfully short ride—just over half an hour long—the album contains exotic delicacies with Heron King. The title track finds weaving guitars and purring bass joining vibrant Afro-toned beats. "Distracted Minds" is a lovely, guitar-led vocal duet featuring Nina Miranda and Baaba Maal, whilst "Can It Be" underpins Courtney Denni's wandering vocals with sticky beats and perfect keys. *Serious* is music seriously unconstrained by geographical boundaries. *Jon Freer*



**GREG DAVIS CURLING POND WOODS** *Carpark/US/CD*  
**GREG DAVIS MORT AUX VACHES** *Staalplaat/NETH/CD*

When Greg Davis released his 2002 debut full-length, post-rock and the rediscovery of John Fahey had resulted in the coining of a new term: "folktronica." And the way Davis wove crisp acoustic pastorals through a (stereo) field sometimes peppered by digital snow flurries certainly made the term feel appropriate. With his follow-up, *Curling Pond Woods*, Davis further refines his muted melancholia. Throughout the 10 tracks, composed melodies float with the grace of a 19th century debutante pining for her absent lover. One possible inspiration is the weaving isolation of the road, as at least two tracks were in development when Davis taped *Mort Aux Vaches*, recorded live in Amsterdam on Davis's spring 2002 tour with Hrvatski. *Vaches* is like slowly rolling the radio dial through the spectrum's upper reaches—sometimes the transmission gets thin, other times it's flecked with field-recording phantoms. *Tony Ware*

**DJ SPOOKY VS. TWILIGHT CIRCUS RIDDIM CLASH** *Play/US/CD*

*Riddim Clash* is a classic soundclash for a post-postmodern world—only the combatants are post-dub, post-hip-hop and post-punk. The face-off between DJ Spooky and Twilight Circus Dub Soundsystem brings on italy sounds of Lee Scratch Perry proportions—check "Phase Anansi" with its funky Hammond—and also slow, funky, siren-laden street grit. And just to convince you that this match-up has versions galore, listen to how they twist the Cure's "Love Cats" into their own "Dust Storm." *Daniel Siwek*



**EGG DON'T POSTPONE JOY** *Mutek\_Rec/CAN/CD*

Destined to become one of the best labels in the minimal sphere, Mutek\_Rec launches its catalogue with *Don't Postpone Joy*, a sprightly exercise in herk 'n' jerk house for the geektronic massive. Together known as Egg, producers Julien Roy and Guillaume Coutu-Dumont stick close to the glitch script, pairing hacked-up kicks and flord flamenco guitar loops on the exemplary "Clara." Best of all might be "Rouge De Base," which is driven by an electrofied pulse, an urgent bass riff and an effervescent synth melody. Far from classic, consider this one a confident first step and suitably tangy forerast of big things to come. *Martin Turenne*

**CARL A. FINLOW ELECTRILOGY+** *Device/UK/CD*

Ostensibly a compilation of Finlow's annoyingly packaged 12-inch trilogy of last year (with three bonus tracks), *Electrilyg+* actually makes for a more than enjoyable CD listen. Never one to scrimp on intricate minutiae, Finlow summons, scrapes and shoves thousands of sounds into each second of electro brilliance he crafts. There's

much to appreciate in this long-format disc, including a range of dancefloor emotions and the beautiful way his galloping electro tracks benefit from the insertion of his own heavily processed voice. *Brion Paul*

**THE FITNESS CALL ME FOR TOGETHER**

*The Control Group/US/CD*

By combining dancey synth beats with hard-edged guitar riffs (no way!), The Fitness is trying to pioneer "new" territory that's already been discovered and defiled. Although their melodies and lyrics are catchy and amusing, you can't help but sit there, twiddle your thumbs, and think about how many other bands they sound like. Ironically, The Fitness adamantly claims to be against NYC electroclash, a sound that they encompass right down to their distorted vocals and glitchy beats. But irony is hot right now, right? *Julia Chan*



**THE FREE DESIGN KITES ARE FUN** *The Free Design HEAVEN/EARTH* *Light In The Attic/US/CD*

Whiter than white, fluffier than a cloud, the Free Design's music is so carefree, ebullient and uplifting it must be the handwork of a sinister cult. But no, the band consisted of four Dedrick siblings (two guys, two gals) who sang like Dale Carnegie-trained angels and floated in the same sunshine-filled ether as contemporaries the Association, 5th Dimension and the Zombies. These nicely packaged reissues of 1967's *Kites Are Fun* and 1969's *Heaven/Earth* showcase this New York group's cynicism-melting vocal harmonies, gorgeous orchestral-pop arrangements and classical music training, which bolsters the songs with a sophistication and depth beyond that of their more celebrated peers. You may initially think the Free Design are a parody of innocent, Ultrabrite pop, but they're as serious as your life and much more beautiful. Look out for remixes by Nobody, Stereolab and Madlib later this year. *Dave Segal*

**JEAN GRAE THE BOOTLEG OF THE BOOTLEG EP**

*Babygrande/US/CD*

Goddamn, Jean Grae has done it again. Grae's the illest female on the mic, but it ain't even about being in the "female" subdivision; she will smoke a whole lot of MCs regardless of X or Y chromosomes. Boasting a flow that spills forth endlessly and effortlessly, Grae hits all the benchmarks of a great lyricist: funny, insightful, clever and gifted with words. The production on this disc isn't stellar, but it is solid, and a workable beat is all Jean needs to get busy. Throw in a big-ass bonus track of freestyles, and this is a straight-up sure shot. *Pete Bamb*

**J LIVE ALWAYS WILL BE** *Fat Beats/US/CD*

I want to cream over J Live's new EP the way I creamed over last year's *All of the Above*, but I think this rhymesmith is capable

of more than this new album's plodding beats and blasé horns. Vocally, J Live occasionally forays into Five Percent lyrics, but lacks the flair of Wu-Tang Clan or Brand Nubian. Mostly, it sounds as though he's been preoccupied by financial woes, which come to the fore on "Deal Widit" and "Car Trouble." That's real, but too familiar—I'd rather hear Hollow Tip rap about thug life. *Rachel Swan*

**JACKMATE THE PRODIGAL SON**

*Resopal Schallware/GER/CD*

It's always gratifying to hear non-US producers devoting themselves to keeping Chicago house alive. The debut album from Germany's Michel "Jackmate" Baumann applies the jackin' sensibilities of deep house to tech- and micro-musical hybrids, fashioning tracks that stay true to the unmistakably emotional flow that so electrified Chi-town's seminal sound. On "Manray," Bauman cuts his 4/4 beats with sweeping trance melodies reminiscent of leading mid-'90s Euro labels like FNAC, while "Chicago Toronto" leans easily into classic house grooves, touched with the purr of male vocals. A stirring rework of clubland's finest dancefloor hours. *Janet Tzou*

**KV:5 NATURAL SCIENCE**

*Prolifica/UK/CD*

Mimicking the fat basslines that lope around its bottom ends, *Natural Science* by West London soul artists KV:5 is an album that rarely keeps still, working its way from the dubby "Landslide Victory Vendetta" to the minor-key folk flavors of "Treactle." But each song gets the same tender attention to nuance, from the multi-tracked whistle on the happy-go-lucky "Flying Right" to the soaring strings on the stellar "Shelter Melter," which recalls 4Hero at their best. The track programming may keep you off-balance, but even after many listens KV:5's brand of scientific soul keeps serving up new rewards. *Peter Nicholson*



**LA SYMPHONY THE END IS NOW** *PIGEON JOHN PIGEON JOHN IS DATING YOUR SISTER*

*Basement/US/CD*

While the mainstream awaits a West Coast retort to 50 Cent's market dominance, LA's Basement Records travels the high road, offering two slabs of classic conscious material. The five-way attack known as LA Symphony disappoints. Their album is a cliché-ridden exercise in underground idealism, fated to find a warm reception only among ballcap-clad zealots. Freed of his Symphony cohorts, Pigeon John forges a distinct persona, marked by his emotive everyman tales and jazz-influenced phrasing. Neither a singer nor a spitter, PJ hurdles high over every beat, whether dealing with his biracial heritage on "Identity Crisis" or lustful urges on "What Is Love?" Now *this* is more like it. *Martin Turenne*



B. Fleischmann

**B. FLEISCHMANN WELCOME, TOURIST!** *Morr/GER/CD*

Well, hello yourself, gorgeous! B. Fleischmann's back with a two-CD set of unbelievably warm and perfectly blurred electronics. *Welcome, Tourist!* is full of signature Fleischmann melodies, circular and insular, but he's added other instruments that further round out the glow—witness the dignified piano beneath the shuffling static on "02/00" and his fingers sliding languidly off the guitar strings in "Guided By Beats." "Le Desir," a small shining lullaby, gently clicks its tongue as Charhizma label owner Christof Kurzmann's fragile voice lightly skims the surface; when he sings that "the day was almost shiny" on "Sleep," your heart crumples just a little bit. *Welcome's* a whisper that lingers long in the ear. *Selena Hsu*





Maja Hajduk

Savath + Savalas

**SAVATH + SAVALAS APROPA'T** *Warp/UK/CD*

Warning: this Scott Herren project sounds nothing like Prefuse 73. In the rush to heap praise upon Herren, critics have forgotten that Savath + Savalas predated his predominately hip-hop/jazz mash-up project by a year. One can instead compare the strong Latin folk influences of *Apropa't* to its predecessor, 1998's *Folk Songs for Trains, Trees and Honey*, with its more brazen use of light jazz, funk and granola folk. Recorded in Herren's new Barcelona studio, *Apropa't* luxuriantly grooves with delicate guitar ditties and harmonized vocals, and smacks of quaint Spanish cafés on warm summer nights. Forget the hype, and *Apropa't* it for yourself. *Heath K. Hignight*

**LAB RAT XL MICE OR CYBORG**

*Clone/NETH/CD*

In the wake of James Stinson's death last year, Drexciya's other half, Gerald Donald, unleashes these six untitled tracks—the last of Drexciya's "seven storms" of blistering techno—effectively closing the book on one of Detroit's most respected outfits. Where the prior storm, Transillusion's 2002 LP *L.I.F.E.*, was infused with rich flavors of Indian and Asian melodic origin, *Mice or Cyborg* is straight-up Detroit steak-and-potatoes techno, rarely indulging in superficial garnishes. It's all thunderous bass and Space Invaders attack music on "Lab Rat 2," "Lab Rat 3" toys with a house undercurrent; and there's a nod toward AFX's atmospheric acid on "Lab Rat 6." All of this converges to make *Mice or Cyborg* a fitting coda to the Drexciya catalog. *Heath K. Hignight*

**THE LIMP TWINS**

*Tales From Beyond the Groove*

This album dwells more on the music of Will "Quantic" Holland and Russ "Rusty" Porter's childhood and their friendship than it does on past studio relationships with live funk bands or hop-heavy bass outings. *Tales From Beyond...* is a guitar-driven album whose humor must be applauded in a culture where downcast sentiments and serious demeanors rule the roost. "If It Ain't Broke...Break It" is indeed smashed to smithereens courtesy of lurking bass and shimmying guitars, while "Get It Back" puts a brave face on a gloomy situation as low-slung guitar action takes the lead. Listen with an open mind! *Jon Freer*

**LMNO & MUM'S THE WORD COLLISION**

*Smoggy Day/US/CD*

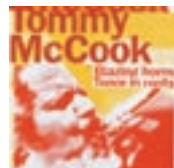
LMNO of the Visionaries teams up with producer Mum's the Word for an album that glories in staying small and taking shit day by day. "Empty Out" has a barebones drum stutter-step, showcasing LMNO's tight-throated, tightly cornering rap, which moves in fits and bursts. The real star here is Mum's production; "Forward" bangs with a peppery slant, and "Jealous" is pure smooth sailing. Check LMNO's history of music, delivered in a single breath. *Selena Hsu*

**LOWFISH 1000 CORRECTIONS PER SECOND**

*Suction/CAN/CD*

Only a person with an active self-editing mechanism could have produced this album title. And indeed, Canadian Gregory De Rocher seems to have eliminated most of pop's errors on this deceptively simple paean to electro/synth pop a la Human League. Tracks hover around four minutes and sport basic melodies that quickly worm into the mind, making it easy to overlook the subtle details of production that make this album much more than nostalgic pap. Lowfish scores

high, providing understated enjoyment while reveling in machine warmth. *Peter Nicholson*



**TOMMY MCCOOK BLAZING HORNS/TENOR IN ROOTS**

*Blood + Fire/UK/CD*

If you thought Lenky Marsden invented minor-key melodies in reggae with his omnipresent Diwali riddim (the foundation for Wayne Wonder's "No Letting Go" and Sean Paul's "Get Busy"), check the Skatalites, who did it first with "Java" and "Eastern Standard Time." Which is to say, the recent trend toward dancehall exotica is actually a tradition. Add original Skatalite McCook's brand-new-second-hand album on Blood + Fire (classic roots, natch) to the mix, and the evolution of reggae riddim over tings and time becomes evident. In other words, there's no future without a past, seen? *Eric K. Arnold*

**MÉTAL URBAIN ANARCHY IN PARIS!**

*Acute/US/CD*

Send back those "Freedom Fries," because all ill-conceived notions of the French as mere pacifists will be burst courtesy of this reissue, an essential compendium of blister-pack post-punk available domestically for the first time. Using an overdriven synth as a protodrum machine, Métal Urbain flew skuzz *sorties*, piloting strafing flurries of static back and forth across the English Channel in the mid- to late '70s. Rough Trade, indeed. Inspired by the Stooges, Brian Eno and Lou Reed, and inspiring the likes of The Jesus & Mary Chain and Big Black, Métal Urbain welded roughly tenderized textures to spare power chords and friction-fused, piston-pumping rants that regularly threatened to seize as they snarled. While contemporaries such as New York's Suicide were putting rockabilly beat poetry to a taut throb, Métal Urbain were metronomic maniacs. Call them French *fried*. *Tony Ware*

**MIKA RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME**

*Klein/AUST/CD*

Synthetic fun, house headiness, and breakbeat cool are equally at home on Mika's second full-length for Austria's Klein. You might even say it's all quite well-timed and well-placed. Mika marries the familiar with the futuristic, crafting socially lubricating party vibes that flow between bubbly dancecapades and street-level lounge grooves. Breathily, blithe vocals keep a lighthearted air throughout shifts in tempo and mood. Melodic strength takes a backseat to nimble production, but the remake of the Beatles' "I'm Looking Through You" is so deft in reinvention, it almost slips past recognition. *Liz Cordingley*

**MYLENE PIRES MYLENE**

*RAMIRO MUSOTTO SUDAKA*

*Fast Horse/US/CD*

Mylene is another Brazilian singer feeding the North American pop diet by lending her pillillate voice to electronic-tinged studio numbers. Her debut, *Mylene*, resembles Bebel Gilberto's 2000 album *Tanto Tempo* and Helena's 2003 *Azul*, minus much of the vision and maturity. Ramiro Musotto's production is varied and conducive of Mylene's vocal stylings, although it sometimes lacks depth. And what to say of Musotto's solo debut? It's rhythmically brilliant, evidencing his Brazilian roots while demonstrating his mastery of polyphonic tempo, timbre and design. Unfortunately, Musotto applies these talents to progressive rave trance. As a result, *Sudaka* sounds contemporary, but only if you favor leather uppers, silk shirts and frosty bars. Ibiza, where you at? *J. David Marston*

**NOS NOT OTHERWISE SPECIFIED**

*OCOSI HERE AND LOATHING*

*Manifold/US/CD*

Even though a title like *Not Otherwise Specified* alludes to music that is unclassifiable (iTunes can't even tell), you can add the new Manifold releases to the dark-hop section. Both discs are anticlimactic, despite serving up a heap of Euro-slasher beatscapes for peeps on Nyquil. Due to label issues, *Not Otherwise Specified* was shelved in '99, but it's back, with layered sonic textures and tampered-with tempos. It's much more haunting than Ocosi's effort—which sounds like rough tracks begging for an MC. There's some interesting atmospheres here, but there's also better places to get your fix of dubby Tesla coils. *Daniel Siwek*



**OCTAVIUS AUDIO NOIR**

*Mush/US/CD*

You tripped and banged your head on the asphalt. When your hand went to your face, little speckled pebbles and a bit of dirt rolled off at the touch, and the bruise was already swelling. Behind the fence, the boombox is trying to eat your tape, Octavius's *Audio Noir*, with the play button stuck. Your ears are full of busted hip-hop, drowned electronics, and vocals shouted and whispered from inside the smash-windowed abandoned house no one dares go near. Dalek and Sonic Sum have visited here, but everyone else has been too scared. You're dizzy, after being knocked out for a terrifying moment. *Rob Geary*

**OTAKU NO DENKI THE FUTURE PLAYED BACKWARDS**

*Viper/UK/CD*

Though their name suggests otherwise, Otaku No Denki is not a Japanese girl band, but a trio of white guys (Chris McCabe, Joey Cannon and Dean Salleyman) from Liverpool. The confusion is understandable, since the futuristic playfulness of their first album, *The Future Played Backwards*, would feel right at home in a neon-lit Tokyo pachinko parlor. The tinny synth melodies of "Calculator" and "My First Telescope" are bright and shiny like pennies on the tongue, and even the moody "Tower" can't fully escape Otaku No Denki's computer-generated optimism. *The Future...* is like one big nod to Kraftwerk's 1981 epic, *Computer World*. *Anna Balkrishna*

**PARSLEY SOUND PARSLEY SOUNDS**

*Mo' Wax/US/CD*

Frozen snares roll across rooftops, swelling strings sway winter trees, and windy words flood cobblestone streets. This is Parsley Sound. Like fellow soft crooners Clientele, Parsley Sound sound like they sipped tea spiked with Elliot Smith's tears. They send breathy Brit vocals swimming in oceans of melancholy melodies pulsing with electronic tides. Their foggy tone is continents from contrived. It's a workingman's expression of romantic grandeur shining in lo-fi. The Parsley Sound will surely soar as plugged-in psychedelic folk continues its rise skyward. Garnish never made us shed so many sparkling tears before. *frosty*

**PEOPLE LIKE US + KENNY G NOTHING SPECIAL**

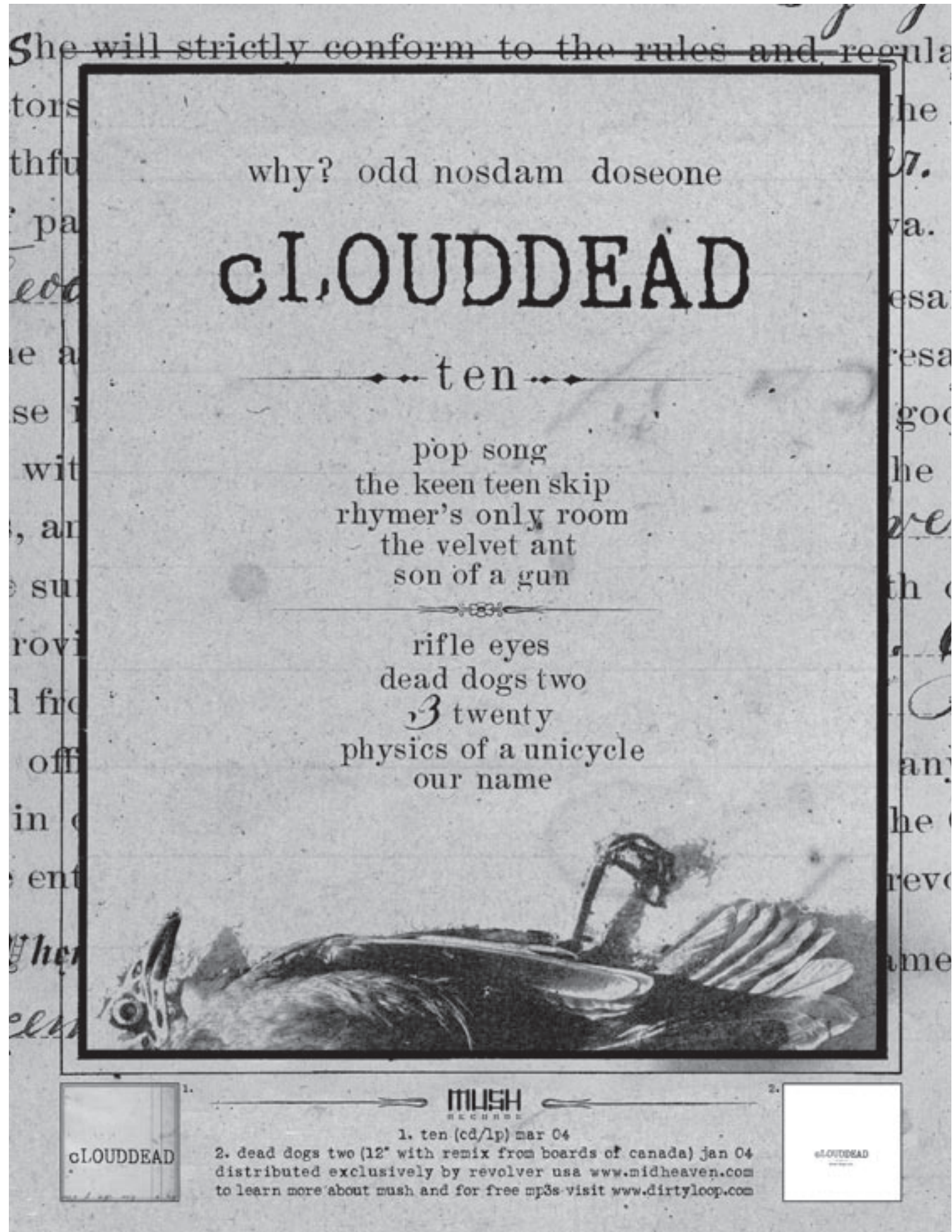
*Mess Media/US/CD*

*Nothing Special* is the ideal party record when everyone is either passed out or anxiously waiting for a ride home. Famed plunder-phonist Vicki Bennett (People Like Us) collaborates with Kenny G (not the yuppie-jazz legend) in this live performance for Jersey City, NJ's WFMU. Here, snippets of thrift store kitsch records and easy-listening oldies are scraped into the kitchen sink for cheap laughs. B-boys could mistake this for Kid Koala hitting the decks with a belly full of NyQuil. Bennett and G mainly let the samples speak for themselves, as when a gentleman confesses his homesickness for the vagina. *Cameron Macdonald*

**PHI-LIFE CYPHER HIGHER FORCES**

*Zebra Traffic/UK/CD*

PLC first hit UK store shelves in late 2000, and they have rarely strayed more than 20 feet from my CD player since. *Higher Forces* employs the same elements that hooked me the first time—the insistent ebb and flow of Life's freestyling carries you along on its rolling tide of social awareness, a feeling rarely experienced except while reading a basement-published leftist weekly. Saying Life is a good rapper is like saying Winston Churchill had a way with words. And DJ Nappa lays an orchestra's worth of instrumental beats down—'50s crooners, '70s booty soul divas and Arabic chanteuses all find themselves inextricably enmeshed in Phi-Life Cypher's utterly rhythmic world. *Margaret Murray*





**PIANA SNOW BIRD**

*Happy/JPN/CD*

Piana's debut solo album is a hybrid of experimental and electro-pop, a mixture this Japanese artist uses to display her evident mastery of music production. Still, *Snow Bird* is too tranquil—nothing happens to push the music beyond a plateau of carefully plucked string instruments and wavy vocal trills. The most interesting sounds here are the chirping birds, but even they transform from innovative Japanese pop addition to New Age frill in under 30 seconds. *Jenn Marston*

**RANDOM NUMBER TOWARDS THE FORLORN SOCIETY**

*I AM ROBOT AND PROUD GRACE DAYS*

*Catmobile/US/CD*

Let's reiterate: computers don't take the humanity out of music, bad musicians do. Luckily Matt Robson and Shaw-Han Liem—Random Number and I Am Robot And Proud, respectively—are not bad musicians. They just lack variety. *Towards* is tragic and contemplative with a few glimmers of resilience in an icy glitchscape. Conversely, *Grace Days* is sweet and warm with innocence and electro-acousticness and, while emotions are equally as sincere here, the resulting sounds do wear a bit thin. Both albums are heartfelt, but not magical. In fact, it sounds like the Random Number could use a big digital hug from the proud Robot. *Liz Cordingley*

**ROOSEVELT FRANKLIN SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE**

*Third Earth/US/CD*

NYC's newly formed Roosevelt Franklin are no strangers to the underground rap game—MC Kimani hails from the Masterminds, while DJ Mr. Len cut his teeth with the seminal Company Flow. Kimani rails on "internet emcees" and fake underground rappers, perhaps alienating his own fanbase but providing laughs nonetheless. He pokes fun at rappers using nonsense big words in "Dropping Mad Science Yo" and channels big money mofos in "I'm So Rich," but the standout tracks are messed-up love songs like "The Line." The sing-a-long chorus of "S N M" sums up Roosevelt Franklin's conundrum: "Smart nigger music! that's how they label it! like we should be ashamed for saying it! cuz the radio stations they ain't playin it! but I don't care man, I'm a stay makin' it!" Frustration with the music industry fuels this creatively ambitious but ultimately underwhelming LP. *DJ Anna*

**SHADOW HUNTAZ CORRUPT DATA**

*Skam/UK/CD*

IDM and hip-hop are strange, but familiar, bedfellows. Hip-hop's loping rhythms and boom bap have been an integral and abstract part of the core of IDM's sound. Now, experimental label Skam releases a straight-up hip-hop album. Exciting production from Quench/Funckarma lends a tricked-out, spatial dub feel, but the overall result is fairly straightforward. With the glaring exception of "Medic," an alien equation of CGI-reconfigured hip-hop, *Corrupt Data* suffers from its conventionality. A fine record, but unfortunately not corrupt enough. *Brian Paul*

**DANI SICILIANO LIKES...**

*IK7/GER/CD*

Dani Siciliano is unique for a number of reasons—the most contradictory of which is that she was a world-renowned artist long before the release of debut single, "Walk The Line," earlier this year. She's Herbert's muse/musical ally, and has provided vocals on a number of his most popular tracks. Her instantly recognizable voice graces Nottingham house producer Brooks's records, going against the grain of a flood of personality-free electronic house. Thus, her debut album, *Likes...*, has been eagerly anticipated, and rightfully so. Be it a Nirvana cover ("Come As You Are"), the aptly titled "Extra Ordinary," or "Red"—whose oddball hip-hop groove is enough to embarrass Outkast—Dani's record does not disappoint. "Walk The Line" is firm, Jill Scott-style put-downs suggested Siciliano wasn't a lady to ignore, and *Likes...* confirms it. *Dave Stenton*

**SNIPER MODE & MBP TRAVELLERS BEYOND**

*Mikrolux/GER/CD*

Unfolding like a series of visions wrested from the sleeping minds of the mad, the German-based Sniper Mode and his Swiss counterpart MBP deliver an intense and versatile album full of psychedelic electro with hints of techno, downbeat and experimental hovering at the edges. This is dark music, cinematic and digitally clean but with just enough grit to make you fear the uncontrolled energy that lurches about like a beast untethered, especially on "Science & Vision," "Trip Drop" and "Dead Cities." As the album begins to wind down, the music becomes dreamy and drugged, drifting into a contradictory downtempo state where beats are slow but the details and atmosphere are overwhelmingly alive. It's a space definitely worth experiencing. *Chris Muniz*

**STEREO TOTAL OH AH**

*STEREO TOTAL MONOKINI*

*Kill Rock Stars/US/CD*

Stereo Total reached indie cult status after the 2002 release of *Musique Automatique*, a kitschy mash-up between Casio tones, '60s pop and geek punk. Those craving more of the same can now turn to the Kill Rock Stars reissues of the duo's 1996 and 1997 albums: *Oh Ah* and *Monokini*, respectively. Both albums are equal parts Annette Funicello, Kraftwerk, Shonen Knife and Eurotrash pop. Rather than

being corny, though, the discs possess a strange, underground sort of glamour—the soundtrack to two artfully coiffed go-go girls racing down the motorway in a candy red car. *Tyra Bangs*

**STRYKE PAGES FROM THE BLUE DIARY**

*HRG/US/CD*

*Pages From The Blue Diary* is an album of contrast and variety. Originally released in 2002 by Miami-based techno producer/DJ Stryke (Greg Chin), the 12-track reissued album leans more toward contemplative, melancholy moodmakers than it does foot-stomping 4/4 dance-floor fillers. Many of the softer tracks are actually the stronger of the bunch, evoking the stark, soulful vibe of Detroit techno. Standouts include the feathery "Heaven" with its rolling keyboard arrangements—think Eurhythmics' "Here Comes The Rain Again"—and John Beltran's remix of "Lost." Though *Pages* is not a perfect album from the classically trained pianist, it's far from a failure. *Tim Pratt*

**TELEFON TEL AVIV MAP OF WHAT IS EFFORTLESS**

*Helty/US/CD*

If glitch is the Mrs. Dash of electronic music, Telefon Tel Aviv is writing the official organic recipes—aphrodisiacs, at that. Following up their debut, *Fahrenheit Fair Enough*, and remixes for Nine Inch Nails and Eminem, *Map* oozes with seductive vocal soul and analog synth in the spectral space of orchestral ambience and computer-based percussion. Employing the Loyola University Chamber Orchestra, guest vocalists, and their own multi-instrumentalism, New Orleans natives Joshua Eustis and Kevin Duneman are smooth operators leading listeners into a breakthrough boudoir where IDM and R&B are gettin' it on. *Liz Cordingley*

**TIKI OBMAR HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL**

*Merck/US/CD*

It makes sense that Graham Chapman, Chris Smally and Brett Bullion have tastes that encompass Oval to Tori Amos—the gathering of experimental techno, indie rock and old-fashioned melancholy on *High School Confidential* is extreme, even within individual songs. It's not uncommon for a snare loop to contract to mere

whispers seconds before catapulting into intense, teen angst-filled guitar chords. While such drastic changes of music and emotion may raise skeptical eyebrows, Tiki Obmar somehow ensures that all elements fit into a single frame. *Jenn Marston*

**TRANS AM LIBERATION**

*Thrill Jockey/US/CD*

Trans Am is living in a police state, and with *Liberation*, they're not gonna take it anymore. Their seventh LP is a return to their signature Kraftwerk-meets-classic-rock-sound and marks the first time the Washington, D.C. trio has placed overt politics in their music. As my personal rule-of-thumb suggests, it should be their last. Public Enemy notwithstanding, soapbox musicianship invariably leads to one big buzzkill, and fun, as I recall, is what made Trans Am interesting in the first place. Although *Liberation* does have its stirring moments, the bumper-sticker politics of tracks like "Uninvited Guest" (guess who that refers to?) mar things too early and too often. *Carleton Curtis*

**UNDERWORLD 1992-2002**

*V2/UK/CD*

From 1992 to 2002, Underworld rocked all that was raved-out and trance transcendent. Pretend this album's a time machine, and you can use it to travel throughout the '90s, listening to the duo progress ("Rez," "Cowgirl") and regress ("Two Months Off"). With the singles picked by Karl Hyde and Rick Smith themselves, (mostly) on-point production, and epic-sounding anthems to match any mood, fans will find plenty to love among these 16 tracks. And yes, "Born Slippy" is on it! *Julia Chan*

**VARIABLE UNIT COLD FLOW**

*Wide Hive/US/CD*

Like *Handbook for the Apocalypse*, *Cold Flow* is a bastard child of some weird Keith Jarrett/electronica tryst. You can't dance to it (although you could probably striptease to it if you were in the zone). I recommend smoking a spliff and watching old PBS videos of sea turtles while you groove on jazzy numbers like "Floating Butterfly in the River Nile" and "Unity Gain." Despite its cool synergy of DJ scratches and stand-up bass, this album would give your average hip-hop head a case of smooth jazz-itis. I started itching for an MC or spoken word poet around the sixth track. *Rachel Swan*



Dean Chalkley

Dizzee Rascal

**DIZZEE RASCAL BOY IN DA CORNER Matador/US/CD**

During his 100-stop tour of the US with Kid606, dj/rupture told me he was only listening to the Dizzee Rascal album, because everything else bored him. I knew exactly what he meant. *Boy In Da Corner* is so much more than just another UK hip-hop record. Rascal and his Roll Deep crew spent their youth breakdancing to Mantronix, MC Craig G and BDP on the grey concrete paving stones of West London, and *Boy In Da Corner* shows the torso-rattling power of dirty snares and handclap sequences. Happily, Rascal isn't interested in nostalgia—he just wants to make drum machines thunder through miles of council estates, and then top them with phrasing that lingers in its jagged pauses. "Fix Up, Look Sharp" really encapsulates the spirit of the record, as Rascal makes even Billy Squier's "Big Beat," that old hip-hop standard, feel like something you've never heard before. Make no mistake: this album is a mothership of British funk that will remain in hearing range for quite some time. *Tim Haslett*

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DJ Hell of International DeeJay Gigolos



- SVEN VÄTH: THE SOUND OF THE FOURTH SEASON**  
*Cocoon/GER/CD*  
**SERIE NOIRE 2: MIXED BY THE GLIMMER TWINS**  
*Eskimo/BEL/CD*  
**INTERNATIONAL DEEJAY GIGOLOS 7**  
*International DeeJay Gigolos/GER/CD*  
**POWERSLAVES: AN ELEKTRO TRIBUTE TO IRON MAIDEN**  
*Angelmaker/NETH/CD*

There's no question that 2003 was a year of war—even international music relations were at an all-time low. The year started in a post-electroclash slump, with techno purists and synth-pop patriots glaring at each other from various continents. It ended with the ultimate compromise: fans of the new electro slowly embraced the genre's non-trendy forbears—beyond Depeche Mode to Drexciya—and techno loosened up a bit, trading in its dour, militant poses for a tiny bit of fashion and a lot more fun. While the Faint made moves in the direction of Kompakt, Richie Hawtin stepped closer to New Romantic.

Coming into 2004, the boundaries between bpm's and genres are more undefinable than ever, as four new compilations from Europe's techno centers prove. Longtime banging techno proponent Sven Väth pursues a more palatable direction on *The Sound of the Fourth Season*, thankfully moving on from such mid-'90s glam travesties as *The Harlequin*, *The Robot and the Ballet Dancer*. The title refers to the fourth season of Väth's Cocoon Records party in Ibiza, but don't bust out your fluffy bras quite yet. Disc one is crammed full of riveting electro/techno gems—including a brilliant sequence that runs from LFO's psychotic "Freak" through DJ Tonio and David Caretta's old-school acid pounding "My Telephone Is Dead"—while disc two pursues a druggy early morning stumble that blurs the lines between Detroit, synthcore and glitch shuffle, even throwing in Dntel's pre-Postal Service gem "(The Dream) of Evan & Chan."

On *Serie Noire 2*, the Glimmer Twins play with the same general pile of sounds

as Väth—sharp booty-moving boom/clack beats and wistful synths—but continually shift tempos, passing from nouveau disco into a healthy helping of acid house flashback, courtesy of Adonis, Green Velvet, Lil' Louis and Mr. Fingers. The disc ends with a surprise helping of post-punk, but thanks to this Belgian duo's curatorial efforts, the 19 tracks feel like a well-informed musical journey rather than a rape of the second-hand bin.

DJ Hell's seventh installment of the Int'l DeeJay Gigolos compilation series again puts this German techno veteran in the position of defending the new electro and he does...sort of. The compilation's 30 tracks highlight some of the year's best fusions of electroclash's catchy hooks and pop personalities with electronic music's keyboard gurgles and sampler squeaks—highlights include Freaks' sinister anthem "The Creeps (You're Giving Me)," Mount Sims's yearning "No Yellow Lines," and hot cover art (incorporating a photo of transgender princess Amanda LePore) by Kenzo Minami. Unfortunately, *IDG7* also reminds us that, like pop, electroclash tracks aren't meant to have a long shelf life. These two discs could probably be pared down to one without anyone missing Crossover's tepid cut 'n' paste or DJ Hell's painfully annoying mainstream dance reworking of P. Diddy and Kelis' "Let's Get III."

Several more groans await on *Powerslaves*, an "elektro" tribute to Iron Maiden. Even contributions from Kitbuilders, Legowelt and Mr. Velcro Fastener can't raise the bar on this concept, although Rude 66's take on "Killers" and Captain Ahab's manic gabber rework of "Flash of the Blade" are good for a few seconds of head-banging and air synth playing. *Powerslaves* is an example of good electro artists going bad, churning out made-in-five-minutes songs barely worth their kitsch value. More than that, it draws new electro and techno further apart rather than closer together. Techno fans prefer their music like Iron Maiden: classic. **Vivian Host**





**IKEBANA: MERZBOW'S AMLUX REBUILT, REUSED AND RECYCLED**  
*Important Records/US/CD*

Frustration with re-writes, endless studio discussions about plot inscrutability, scathing art-versus-box office memos and glaringly unfavorable test screenings for his now-classic *Red Badge of Courage* allegedly caused director John Huston to throw up his hands and storm. "The people who will like this movie will like it because they recognize that it's a great film. Nothing we do will please the people who aren't disposed to it." Substitute Japanese extreme-noise godfather Merzbow for Huston, and you have the ideology behind this collection of stellar remixes by DJ Spooky, Staalplaat Sound System, Negativland, Luke Vibert and others. The remixers come together for one

grand battle where aural art wins out over monetary concerns. Merzbow, undisputed master of grinding, shifting noise-scapes, and his *Ikebana* musical partners—some new, some frequent collaborators—display an intrinsic awareness of the melody beneath the noise, the order behind the chaos, and the foundation beneath the abstract. *Margaret Murray*



**ABSTRACT AFRO JOURNEY: MIXED BY RON TRENT**  
*King Street Sounds/US/CD*

Continuing his interest in percussive African rhythms, Chicago-born, Brooklyn-based house and techno prodigy Ron Trent delivers a deep house mix touched with deeply contemplative vibes. *Abstract Afro Journey* pulls from ambient atmospheres and deep house, building something vibrant and unmistakably lovely. Even a brief listen reveals the same spine-tingling, melodic beauty that touched all of the releases on Trent's Prescription label. Dreamy cuts like New African Orchestra's "Village Dance" are anthems for soul-searching, while Ananda Project's stunning masterpiece "Cascades of Colour" clearly references something greater than house beats. An important collection from a house music master. *Janet Tzou*

**BASSWERK SESSIONS: VOL. 2**  
*Basswerk/GER/2xCD*

Germany's Basswerk crew returns with a massive double-pack of world-class beats. Fiercely independent and determined to maintain the original outlaw spirit of drum & bass, the imprint is known for encouraging their artists to experiment with different flavors. That said, don't expect the results to be too far out—the influences here are subtle, and the impressive tracks stay within the range from liquid funk to dark and hard bangers. Highlights come from artists like the Green Man, Misanthrop, Konrad & Coda, Diz:Play, Cytech and the always surprising Giana Brotherz. A collection definitely worth checking out, especially for those interested in the future of drum & bass. *Chris Muniz*

**CALI UNTOUCHABLES PT. 2**  
*Stronghouse/US/CD*

The Cali Untouchables' blend of West Coast rumpshakers is about as thugged-out as mainstream rap can get: almost every track is about messing up somebody's face. Unfortunately, it's also too linear: I listen to *Cali Untouchables Pt. 2* when I'm in the mood to have Clear Channel's gangsta hits *du jour* rammed down my throat. Pudgee P.'s "Smile 2003" remix would be a hot joint, except the beat drags along at a glacial pace, and rappers Jay-Z, 2Pac, M.O.P., and 50 Cent are always clip-clopping ahead. Still, this compilation's got some keepers, including Kurupt's "Dip Dishes" and Benzingo's exclusive 50 Cent diss, "Falling Down." *Rachel Swan*



**CHAMPION SOUNDS: GRANDMASTER ROC RAIDA**  
*DMC/US/CD*

Christened "Grandmaster" in recognition for many years of service in the field, the X-ecutioners' Roc Raida has long held it down for the DJs. With *Champion Sounds*, Raida sits down behind the decks to showcase how turntablists can make records, not just routines. Using pure battah blends to weave together exclusive productions and tracks by Triple Threat DJs, Radar, the Allies, D-Styles, Scram Jones and fellow X-Man Rob Swift, Raida reveals DJs as far more than "featured guests": *Champion Sounds* thumps soundly with tempo and tone taken to task, but at no point does Technics trickery overshadow musicality and momentum. An excellent compilation that features boogie-down beatsmiths and MCs stitched together without getting cut (or dumbed) down. *Tony Ware*

found—see J-Zone's biting NBA sum-up "Alley Oop '04"—but the good moments are overshadowed by the not-so-good ones; the best moment on the disc, DITC's "Day One," has been available for over five years now. *Fat Beats Vol. 3* comes off more like a cash-in than a collection. *Pete Babb*

**FEMALE PRESSURE PRESENTS ACID MARIA & ELECTRIC INDIGO**  
*True People/GER/CD*

Too many mix CDs plow predictable paths, rounding up the usual suspects for perfectly beat-matched tedium. Not so with German jocks Acid Maria and Electric Indigo: these chicks take risks. Acid Maria starts her disc with Lawrence's melodic IDM/minimal techno confection and then deftly moves through compelling variants of house, disco, techno and electro pop. Tracks by Bobby Konders, Thomas Brinkmann, Plastikman and Ark make this disc indispensable. Electric Indigo's transitions aren't always smooth, but she compensates with a deep understanding of funk, dynamite selections (from Wassermann, Cristian Vogel and Superpitcher) and clever segues from pell-mell 4/4 techno to slower-paced electro and back again. *Dave Segal*

**GILLES PETERSON: THE ECLECTIC SESSIONS VOL. 2**  
*Trust the DJ/UK/CD*

It's cool that Gilles Peterson still has somewhere to go creatively, despite having overhauled the global landscape of dance music many times over. Stepping away from the acid jazz/hip-hop fusions he's known for, *The Eclectic Sessions* collects elegant downtempo pieces that easily shape one of the strongest lounge collections of the year. As to be expected from Peterson, this collection moves seamlessly between different genres, from startlingly intelligent hip-hop (Only Child's "Memories") to spine-chilling soul (Aïson Crockett's "Like Rain") to sharply witty house (Nick Holder's hilarious "No More Dating DJs"). Check Max Sedgley's "Happy" for exceptionally tight minimal funk. Essential. *Janet Tzou*

**GLOBAL INDIE CLUBPOP**  
*Enie Meenie/US/CD*

Nothing says "introverted indie kids gone wild" like this compilation sprung from the glam-giddy loins of LA's Par Avion night. Selections range from harmless bubblegum electropop by Spain's Galactica to an endearingly queasy nod to French pop by Osaka's Eel-Fille Unique. Bopping back to the teen scene of 1960s France known as *yé-yé* while maintaining a robotic pelvic thrust forward, *Global Indie Clubpop* isn't as heinous as the title sounds. Discerning shimmy-shakers will find that NYC's I Am The World Trade Center, LA's Seksu Roba, and Montreal's Stars provide spoonfuls of medicine to help the sugar go down. *Liz Cordingley*

**I LIKE IT**  
*Compost/GER/CD*

Germany's Compost has tossed traditional DJ-mix compilations out on their collective ear, at least temporarily. On *I Like It*, four veteran DJs pick their four all-time favorite songs. On this first go-round, Compost's picks are eclectic, to say the least: Munich's electro-loving DJ Hell, Austrian producer/DJ Peter Kruder (Tosca, K&D), Compost figurehead Michael Reinboth (Beanfield), and Munich DJ Theo Thonnessen (Into Somethin'). The results are interesting—many of the artists' picks are obscure tunes from the '80s and '90s, and the accompanying information cards are enjoyable reads. However, the disjointed, non-mixed format isn't necessarily compelling enough to warrant more than a few listens. *Tim Pratt*

**LADYTRON'S SOFTCORE JUKEBOX**  
*Emperor Norton/US/CD*

A veritable user's guide to good taste, the new compilation from UK band Ladytron will bring good cheer to novice listeners and students of the Vidal Sassoon Academy alike. But what's more interesting about *Softcore Jukebox* is the unveiling of Ladytron's many influences—and what they've learned (and borrowed) from them. Happily, they don't attempt to hide their copycatting: the Roxy Music-usurped cover art is, after all, a winking confession. So with the release of what is more accurately a personal mixtape, Ladytron perhaps reposition themselves not as musicians but rather aestheticians. Vexing indeed, but since when has making things pretty been a crime? *Carleton Curtis*

**MICROFUNK KLIKKHOUSE**  
*Neuton/GER/2CD*

Opening with Herbert's "It Takes Two"-jacking mix of Akufen's "Deck the House," and sliding straight into Extra Productionen's lo-fi, homespun soul, Neuton's mammoth comp makes its

*raison d'être* absolutely clear: truncated funk and click-leavened house. While names like Swayzak and Farben may hook you, it's relative newcomers like Areal's Metope and the gorgeously melodic M.I.A. that suggest the genre's new direction. No less indispensable, WMF's comp plumbs the more sentimental side of techno with a collection of deep blue motorik funk from the likes of Antonelli Electric, Mitte Karaoke and Khan. Unfamiliar names suggest something major is afoot in Germany, as minimal techno takes a 90-degree turn into pop's darkest shadows. *Philip Sherburne*



**JOEL MULL: GAZOMETERTRAXX: WATER**  
*XXX/SWE/CD*

Melody and relaxation are the last things that come to mind when listening to Joel Mull. The Swedish techno DJ & producer is known for his punishing DJ sets and *Gazometertraxx: Water* is no exception. Recorded live at the Gazometer rave in Vienna in March 2003, the 18-track compilation features thunderously brutal techno by Mull, Marco Bailey, Hardcell, DJ Rush and James Ruskin, among others. Pummeling techno can be an acquired taste, and while this is a seamless mix, listening to the rapid-fire rhythms at home just can't compete with a booming club sound system. For heads only. *Tim Pratt*

**NEWSOUNDTHEORY VOL. 2**  
*Basiclux/US/CD*

*Newsoundtheory Vol. 2* isn't electronica, it isn't downtempo: it's "nu-lounge," which doesn't so much refer to the bpm's as the general vibe of tracks by Goldlust, Lumiere and Chris Brann. That said, these 17 tracks sound mainly like languid, smoothed-out disco house—the soundtrack to one of those high-end bars where cocktails have names like the Mokatini and long-haired girls in expensive shoes flit about the room. There's a fine line between this so-called nu-lounge and easy listening—they both use a lot of the same aural relaxation techniques—but sometimes there's nothing wrong with music even a mother could love. *Tyra Bangs*

**PEPPERED WITH SPASTIC MAGIC: A SELECTION OF REMIXES BY TWO LONE SWORDSMEN**

*Ratters Gold Club/UK/CD*  
Even if UK pop bands like Texas and Starsailor are aware that their songs have been remixed by Two Lone Swordsmen, it's doubtful they would recognize any semblance of their own work after it's gone back and forth through their two-man mangle. The same applies to the majority of tracks here—Weatherall and Tenniswood simply sound like no one else. So, essentially, *Peppered With Spastic Magic* is a compilation of Two Lone Swordsmen (and Rude Solo) material old, new and previously hard to find. It's certain to please their many fans, and it gets better—this is the first of three volumes. *Dave Stenton*

**PIGEON FUNK REMIXED**  
*Onitor/GER/2LP*

**WHAT WAS IT LIKE BEFORE I GOT INTO ELECTRONICS?**  
*Süd Electronics/UK/2LP*  
Ever seen the *Seinfeld* where George can't stop killing pigeons? This comp's a bit like that. For the next phase in Sutekh and Safety Scissors' avian obsession, the two producers offer up their *Pigeon Funk* singles to a madcap crew including Ark, Wobbly and Jochem Spieth. Feathers fly and breakbeak mayhem ensues, but it's a remarkably consistent collection of chugging Cologne funk, Soft Pink Truth-style cut-ups, and splattercore beatboxing. More sedate is Süd Electronics' comp, in which label-head Portable and friends like Farben, Andy Vaz, and Sutekh stir up a blur of needle-fluffing funk and busted techno that's alternately slinky and jerky. No laptops were harmed in the making. *Philip Sherburne*

**RETURN OF THE DJ VOLUME V**  
*Bomb Hip-Hop Records/US/CD*

Since *Return of the DJ Volume I* came out in 1995, the series has chronicled the growing pains of the burgeoning turntablism movement: the formative years, the inevitable masturbatory phase, and finally, the discovery of self, when true growth begins. *Volume V* showcases this last phase. The '89 Skratz Gangstaz screen the timely "Director's Cut," a hilarious pastiche of pre-gubernatorial Schwarzenegger samples; Ales One and Teeko get downright nasty on "Detonator," and DJ Marvel offers the cleanest cuts this side of DJ Revolution on "1-8-7." The real standouts are Noisy Stylus's utterly enjoyable veggie anthem "Broccoli Wars," Azzurro and Hashim B's "Quattro Respirato" (the genre's first ode to deep-breathing techniques) and DJ JS1's scathing "Ventilation." *Ross Hogg*

**SATURDAY MORNING EMPIRES**  
*Intr\_version/CAN/CD*

*Saturday Morning Empires* is a lovely compilation of slow-glazed electronica from Montreal's Intr\_version. Loscil's "The Grid" has clear edges beset with icy chimes, like a brightly brittle morning after a storm—its hard, pure glint gives way to a simple guitar motif with a steady, subtly glitchy pulse. Ghislain Poirier's "300,000 Engants Soldats" contains all the stillness and sadness of a curl of steam rising from a teacup, and the Polmo Polpo track is a dream drift propelled by chipper guitar plucks. Meanwhile, Tim Hecker haunts the edges of the album with très filtered guitar creep. *Selena Hsu*

**STRICTLY THE BEST VOLUME 31**  
*VP/US/CD*

**THE BIGGEST RHYTHMS**  
*Greensleeves/UK/CD*  
Downsized to a single volume from two discs, the '03 edition of the long-running *Strictly the Best* series feels fit and trim. In addition to guaranteed session-starters like Elephant Man's "All Out," Junior Kelly's "Smile," and Wayne Marshall's "Hot in the Club," *Vol. 31* contains a bevy of exclusive tracks from the likes of Beenie Man, Baby Cham, Tanto Metro & Devonte, and Wayne Wonder (on a remix with

Mobb Deep & Fat Joe). And while the almost-unrelenting barrage of bashment beats, vocoder effects, call-and-response chants, and lots of lyrics about sex might seem formulaic, it's a formula that's obviously working. *The Biggest Rhythms* ditches lyrical flexing for 18 crisp instrumentals that show off the hottest riddims of the year, from Lenky's Diwali and Masterpiece to Computer Paul's Bollywood and Vendetta's Good To Go. The biggest surprise is how well this collection works at home, as background music for personal bashments. *Eric K. Arnold*

**THEMSELVES**

**THE NO MUSIC OF AIFFS/THE NO MUSIC REMIXED**  
*Anticon/UK/CD*  
This remix album of *The No Music* by indie-hoppers Themselves (the pairing of Doseone and Jel) sounds like your grandpa after a particularly large Sunday dinner. It's full of gurgles and creaks, drums that sound like heart palpitations and bass sounds that come farting out of the speakers in artful patterns. What's nice is that it lacks the droning boom-bap that even the most oddball hip-hop can't step away from—Jel's breaks and Doseone's elliptical raps are swept into the sampler and redone into lo-fi guitar sauce, ear-splitting gabber, and Renaissance Fair glitch by such names as the Notwist, Hood and Hrvatski. Tasty, and sometimes tasteless. *Vivian Host*



**THIS IS HOW WE LOUNGE**  
*Sunshine Enterprises/AUST/CD*

**ENNIO MORRICONE REMIXES VOL. 1**  
*Compost/GER/CD*  
Must be something in the bratwurst, 'cause those Germans and Austrians sure know how to program compilations. Though these two examples of Teutonic technique rely on wildly different source material (the catalogue of Viennese label Sunshine Enterprises and the film scores of spaghetti Western master Morricone), both result in discs that work for adventurous dancefloors as well as



**OFF THE WALL: 10 YEARS OF WALL OF SOUND**  
*Wall of Sound/UK/2xCD*

Diverse British hip-hop/breaks/dance label Wall of Sound's sensibility has always bordered on giddily schizophrenic, and *Off the Wall* has eccentricity in spades. By culling tracks from a list of artists nurtured over the label's 10-year history, mother hen and tastemaker Mark Jones fashions these two discs into one big happy dance party, where longtime WOS contributors like cinematic trip-hoppers Propellerheads and Norwegian chart toppers Röyksopp frog march over the likes of electro-pop punster Les Rythmes Digitales and loveable Citroën shillers the Bees. The second CD, mixed by Alex Gifford, is a gem, featuring rare banging remixes from Ashley Beedle, X-Press 2, and Jon Carter. Chock full of bombastic label hits, arranged to make the most of the imprint's unconventional cast members, *Off the Wall* is a must-have look back. *Margaret Murray*





It's a cool wind blowing in the Downtown D: DJ Minx

**HOUSE GUEST REVIEWS: DJ MINX**

In the house realm, the D stands for both Detroit and diva, and few take on both identities like DJ Minx. Inspired by nights at the city's famed Music Institute, Minx jumped into the DJ game in the mid-'90s as on-air hostess and engineer for the Deep Space radio show on Detroit's WGPR, which got her in contact with encouraging biggies like Derrick May and Kevin Saunderson. Since then, she's accelerated her run on the global house DJ circuit. Alongside gigs in North America and Europe, Minx brings her blend of funky, powerful house monthly to the Velvet Room in Windsor, Ontario.

And for the past seven years, Minx has run the Women on Wax DJ collective—made up of female spinners from the metro Detroit area—which she plans to tour nationally. She's also working on her second EP for the WOW label, which has left her about 15 seconds to let you know what's tweaking her boogie bone. **Ron Nachmann**

**REGGIE DOKES A PIECE OF THE AFRO EP Psychotasia/US/12**

Silky smooth tech-house from the label owner, with swollen keyboard arrangements throughout. "Men of Spirit" is deep, chilled downtempo with a smooth groove, while "Simply Ask" is basically Reggie meets Larry Heard. On the flipside, Dokes teams up with his partner Scott Ferguson to add an African twist to Psychotasia's fi rst single, "Black Thoughts." In a nutshell, this EP is hott!! **DJM**

**DRIVETRAIN TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT Soiree/US/12**

Sleazy listening! Pam Vernon sings on yet another Soiree must-have. Drivetrain's original mix is for the house heads with its beautifully arranged bassline—very MAW-like. Rennie "Dubnut" Foster's Abandoned Warehouse mix takes you back to the days of sweating at the clubs with nothing but a strobe light. This is damn good club music. **DJM**

**THEO PARRISH TWIN CITIES EP Harmonie Park/US/12**

Soulful house with a killer seductive sound. Theo has a unique production style that can't be matched. "Dance Sing" is mesmerizing; the reverbed congas will put you in a neck brace! "Twin Cities" smokes, with a kalimba rollin' and rattlin' from beginning to end. Mr. Parrish has laid down yet another set of tight grooves for Harmonie Park. **DJM**

**JEFF BENNETT ADVANTAGES Morris Audio/GER/12**

Prolific Swede Bennett hands over another stellar set of Detroit tech-imbued house. He builds a jackin' percussive intro on the 10-minute a-side, "The Opening," before dropping in a subliminal bassline and intriguing synth stabs. On the flip, "Idle Inside" offers distorted and subterranean midtempo flavor, while "Ignoring" slices piano chords and congas on top of its dubwise bassline. Swingin'. **Ron Nachmann**

**BRIO CARNIVAL Cabaret/US/12**

Top-notch New York house producer Pal Joey shifts his focus to the traditional sounds of Puerto Rico on this tasty plate. The a-side simply comprises his straight-up recording of island musicians melding the conga-heavy percussion of African-rooted *bomba* music with the spunky Spanish/native Taino chants of the *plena* form. On the flip, he adds a spirited female vocal, his trademark hard-hitting bass and beat programming, and some surprisingly unobtrusive keyboards to create a unique, storming piece for the floor. **Ron Nachmann**

**LOOSEFINGERS EP Alleviated/US/12**

Chicago house pioneer Larry Heard reclaims the early-'80s Loosefingers moniker that he eventually shortened to Mr. Fingers. But that's history, and Heard's still building the future. Between the midtempo ambient narcosis of "Glancing at the Moon," the lush melange of keyboards and airy vocals on the sophisticated "Deep Inside," and the adrenalized synth bounce of "Lamentation," you'll wonder why so many pretenders to the genre even bother while this cat's still alive. Salud, Larry. Robert "Boogie" Sheltell



Mr. Playboy of the Minimalist World over here: Sender's Benno Blome

**TECHNO GUEST REVIEWS: BENNO BLOME/SENDER RECORDS**

Berlin has got the undeniable lock on every aspect of minimal techno, and it's thanks to playas like Benno Blome, the top cat at Sender Records. Blome, who started his DJ career in the mid-'90s in his hometown Cologne, established Sender with Kompakt as distributor, scoring buzz at mega-musicfest Popkomm in 2000 with "Auf Empfang," the first single in his weltZwei guise with collaborator Matthias Klein. Soon, Blome was comfortably resettled in Berlin, and seeding Sender's discography with material from regulars like Jake Fairley and Misc., alongside items like an early single release

by electronic punk T.Raumschmiere and solid comeback slabs by early rave vet Baby Ford. When he's not working on his forthcoming mix-CD, Blome spins regularly throughout Germany and Europe, repping Sender and its mystically futuristic city with sets that range from TV Tower techno to crunch house. Here's some of what you might hear from him. **Ron Nachmann**

**BABY FORD BUILT IN Force Inc./GER/12**

Another living legend says hello with new tracks for Germany's Force Inc. label. The a-side is a phenomenal, moody groover with the typically strange Baby Ford vocal particles and strings. The b-side offers two more minimal and funky tracks that just keep on going and going. **BB**

**DBX BLIP, BLURP, BLEEP EP Logistic/FRA/12**

Three unreleased tracks by minimal-techno legend Daniel Bell. My favorite is "Phreak Yo Body," which is pure jackin' Chicago, old-skool style. I guess Mr. Bell still has lots of great unreleased tracks like this in his archive. **BB**

**UNDO/REDO GLEIT/ZEIT Areal/GER/12**

This is another great release by the Areal label from Cologne. Undo/Redo is a project by Metope and Konfekt/Konkord, and they make crunchy techno tracks for the best time of the night. Two of the tracks here knock you out right away, while the other two are more subtle. Check it out! **BB**

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

**THE GREAT LAKES SOUND EP Secret Weapon/CAN/12**

The regionally minded Torontonians at the Secret Weapon label have made it their mission to flog thoroughly thumping sounds worldwide—and who's to stand in their way? Their third release finds a mysterious top cop mixing mechanical whirrs with a martial bassline on "Jack In Space," which gets stripped down and set to heavy shuffle mode by Berlin boy Jake Fairley. The elastic, synth-centered "Ignition" offers twangy contrast, making for a potent slab of vinyl overall. **Ron Nachmann**

**BLACK NOISE NATURE OF THE BEAST REMIXES 2 BACKDRAFT FILTER EP**

**End-to-end/US/12**  
Detroit killer Mike Grant keeps doin' it with the End-to-end subsidiary of his Big 50 Entertainment umbrella. Black Noise goes the all-star route by subjecting their deep and slightly distorted "Nature..." to a propulsive, filter-enveloped Model 500 mix by your man Juan Atkins and a broken-tech rub by Shake Shakir. Meanwhile, Backdraft arrives with some upfront hard tech, some sublime filtered tech-house, and some squishy subterranean thump. Signed, sealed and delivered from the D, see? **Ron Nachmann**

**CAVE THE CARIMA EP Hydrophonic/UK/12**

Following the frenzy surrounding his massive club hit "Carnival," expectations have been high for this Norwegian to deliver more organic polyrhythmic fuel. Here he pairs Brazilian flavors with Logic Audio manipulation and goes for a bit of sample mayhem. With African vocals and full-fledged hedonist mood on tap, the sound is there—although the bus definitely stops short of the havin'-it "Carnival." **PRAXIS**

**HUNTEMANN DISCOTECH UK**

**Confused/UK/12**

Feeling a bit confused regarding the direction of top international club techno? Oliver Huntemann offers some vision with this massive, disco-infused synth pop, electro-tech jam. From a driving sixteenth-note progressive bassline to the squelching power of the distorted guitar lead, this one will appeal to headbangers and chrome shirts alike. **PRAXIS**

**M. MAYER PRIVAT**

**REINHARD VOIGT/JAKE FAIRLEY SPEICHER 13 Kompakt/GER/12**

Looking to overtake smelly water as the city's main export, Cologne's stripped-down techno scene hasn't slowed its roll, as shown by these two newbies from its top label. Head honcho Micheal Mayer kills you softly with one cut each of hypno-clap-house and bubbly shuffle-tech before unveiling the lucky-number volume of their Speicher split-single series, which sees Reinhard Voigt battle Toronto boy Jake Fairley's spiralling '80s-ish grind with some tasty minimalist bleep. **Ron Nachmann**

**NAGEN & SAUGEN DEEP THROAT RMXS Hoerspie/GER/12**

With the global success of their '98 tune "Deep Throat," Nagen and Saugen return, brandishing the winning entries from an internet contest to remix the damn thing. From funky and deep to filthy and hard, the contributing artists cover all the bases for a texturally varied techno remix EP. Although the bits become slightly monotonous, the overall versatility saves the day. **PRAXIS**

**PERCY X & MARK BROOM LADY KILLER Sama/UK/12**

This pair reacquaints themselves with more crossover club rhythms, and the resulting fusion emits a taste of techno and the essence of house. A loopy yet definable progression, the feel of "Lady Killer" is scurried by solid analog drums and taunting stabs, while a clever effect algorithm places the ambiance. Flip for a more traditional, tool-oriented funk monkey. **PRAXIS**

"How can something so wrong be so right?" — NME





His shirt mysteriously dissolved, our hero contemplates his next move: Biz Markie

**HIP-HOP GUEST REVIEWS: BIZ MARKIE**

If you think like KRS One, you see hip-hop as a state of consciousness. If you're all about Jay-Z and P. Diddy, you see it as an empire. But if you consider hip-hop as a state of pure joy, you're in line with the music's reigning clown prince, Biz Markie. Born Marcel Hall in Harlem, Biz has been in the game from alpha as a rapper, producer and DJ. He rhymed on Manhattan's early '80s club circuit; linked with legendary producer Marley Marl to lace tunes by MC Shan and Roxanne Shanté with his astonishing beatbox skills; then helped launch the career of fellow giant Big Daddy Kane. But it's his recording career that's generated hip-hop's most clever and hilarious rhymes ("Cause me without big strong thoughts for a Biz song/Is like Patty LaBelle not singing with a wig on." Umm, case closed, people). Sure, Gilbert O'Sullivan's 1993 lawsuit against the Biz for unauthorized sampling on "Alone Again" did knock the veteran out of the game for a long minute. But Biz's comeback—sparked by his late '90s alliance with the Beastie Boys and a string of DJ gigs—is in full effect with his recently released long-awaited sixth album, *Weekend Warriors* (Tommy Boy). The new material includes cameos by Elephant Man and the abovementioned Diddy, and reveals that the jester's lost none of his skills or pep. Check what's rotating under this legend's fingers. *Ron Nachmann*

**CEE-LO FEAT. TIMBALAND I'LL BE AROUND**

*Arista/US/12*  
It reminds me of a DC go-go joint, and I like go-go. I've always liked the way Cee-Lo rhymes, and you know Timbaland always comes with something funky. *BM*

**THE DIPLOMATS DIPSET ANTHEM**

*Def Jam/US/12*  
I like Juelz Santana because of his rhyme style—it's not the same style as everybody else. He got a different feeling when he rhymes. *BM*

**ALICIA KEYS YOU DON'T KNOW MY NAME**

*J-Records/US/12*  
She came off with this one because the beat is funky and I feel her emotion. It takes me back to one of those Jackson 5 joints. It makes ya feel good, you know what I mean? *BM*

**MUSIQ FOR THE NIGHT**

*DetSoul/US/12*  
It's a soulful, danceable joint that I like to play in my set when I DJ. It puts people in the right mood to party. *BM*

**KANYE WEST THROUGH THE WIRE**

*Roc-A-Fella/US/12*  
I like what he did with that sample of Chaka Khan. I just feel what he was tryin' to do by puttin' his experiences on wax. *BM*

**A TRIBE CALLED QUEST FEAT. ERYKAH BADU ICU (DOIN' IT)**

*Jive/US/12*  
Come on, now. If you need to read this trifling review before deciding whether or not to buy Tribe's first record in five years, then you ain't hip-hop. The lead single off the upcoming Violator comp picks up where *The Love Movement* left off: soft swells over bouncy four-on-the-floor beats, Erykah's silky voice, and Tip and Phife going back and forth with sex rhymes that manage to sound charming instead of churlish. Like butter, baby. *Ross Hogg*

**CHARIZMA & PEANUT BUTTER WOLF HERE'S A SMIRK EP**

*Stones Throw/US/12*  
Like too many in hip-hop, the Stones Throw story will be forever marked by the nagging "what if" questions brought by the bullet that took gifted San Jose rhymer Charizma in 1993. Culled from *Big Shots*, the recently

released "lost" album that he and ST founder Peanut Butter Wolf recorded for the Disney-backed Hollywood Records, this EP perfectly captures both the bravado of Charlie's crisp, East Coast-style and the raw energy of Wolf's early production tactics. The heartbreak that comes from listening to the B-side's radio-show freestyle excerpt almost makes you want to lift the needle. But you just can't. We miss ya, Charizma. *Ron Nachmann*

**CONSEQUENCE TURN YASELF IN**

*ABB/US/12*  
When Consequence got down on Tribe's *Beats, Rhymes & Life*, everyone thought he was destined for greatness, but years later, this is his first legitimate solo effort. Although both tracks feature Kanye West beats, "Turn Yasef In" languishes somewhere between soul and hip-hop, while "Yard 2 Yard" finds Cons and Rhymefest spitting pure fire. "Bitch Rider," produced by J-Blast, is also a knocker, with beefy drums and a nice sitar loop. *Ross Hogg*

**DJ SAT-ONE AFTER MIDNITE**

*Soulspazm/US/12*  
Jazzy Jeff associate Sat-One—an accomplished graf writer, producer, and, of course, DJ—provides Last Emperor and Pauly Yamz with a mean and moody beat perfectly suited to their verbal invectives and his own staccato scratches on "After Midnite." On "The Popoff," Kamachi joins Baby Blak over a happy little organ-driven beat that somehow works with the MCs' rugged flows. "Skratch Makaniks" is named for and features Sat-One's crew (Jay Ski, Kwestion and Excel) and showcases their considerable cuts. *Ross Hogg*

**KEAK DA SNEAK FEAT. E-40 T-SHIRT, BLUE JEANS, AND NIKES**

*Moe Doe/US/12*  
Some thought that former 3X Krazy member Keak Da Sneak was 10 times crazy to have fellow Bay Area rapper E-40 on this single, as 40 tends to outshine all his hosts. But the

gravel-voiced Keak more than holds his own. Over a sinister Rick Rock beat, you can almost see Keak's mean mug as he breaks down the dress code, while the ever-innovative 40 coins a new term for the law: hella kiznoppers. *Ross Hogg*

**KERO ONE CHECK THE BLUEPRINTS/THE CYCLE REPEATS**

*Plug Label/US/12*  
"Keep it real." Easy to say, hard to do. Kero One, however, does it to death on this record. Not only does he rhyme and make his own beats, but he does the cuts on "Blueprints" (DJ Seoul Control cuts elsewhere). And he's a graf head, as he attests on "The Cycle." The beats are straight outta '93—jazzy and organic, lots of boom-bap and not the least bit contrived—and Kero's easy delivery fits the mold perfectly. And that's real. *Ross Hogg*



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Don't lift that one, monsieur, that's the one playing: Le Lutin

**DRUM & BASS GUEST REVIEWS: LE LUTIN**

Le Lutin—whose moniker translates into “goblin”—is France's most upfront d&b DJ, mixing dub after dub of pure dance-floor pressure with speed and a devilish grin. Hailing from the southwestern city of Toulouse, Lutin was responsible for the wildly popular Jungle Fever monthly at the Bikini club, as well as a biweekly radio show and compilations for French labels Vendome and Black Tambour. These days, Lutin resides in Paris, and when he's not running the Metaphor label with partner DJ Spinal from Montreal, he's busy making tunes like the recent “Futur Mashup.” We dragged his spilled-up ass out of the studio to ask him what's hot this month. *Tyra Bangs*

**BARON THE WAY IT WAS *Virus/UK/12***

It looks like the Virus camp has changed directions with this release by new signing Baron. Really different than their usual stuff, and it's really surprising to ear some nu-school jump-up on this label. Anyway, it does the job. While the title track is a typical Baron tune, “Redhead” on the flipside is the one to watch. With its trademark Baron intro driving into a heavy, catchy and efficient b-line, this tune gets rewinds wherever I play it. *LL*

**EBONY DUBSTERS VOL. 3 MURDERATION (WHO RUNS TINGS PT. 2) *Ebony/UK/12***

Another devastating anthem from Shy Fx & T Power. “Murderation” is a pure jungle smasher that brings us back to the “Original Nuttah” days, but in a fresh way, with two different mixes. Heavy drum breaks combine with a catchy reggae vocal sample to lift the crowd, which this one does everywhere it's played. *LL*

**KEATON & HIVE BRING IT ON *Violence/US/12***

After “The Plague,” Keaton & Hive deliver another anthem. This is THE ONE. This tune's got everything: a fat drum loop building around really famous hip-hop sample and a disgustingly tearing bassline...it's a killer. It gets rewinds at least three times per set, and it's in the Top 10s of all A-list DJs. On the flip, “Under Pressure” is a fresh, fresh tune (just finished) from the boys. More militant drums in the intro, and sick, heavily distorted kick bass. A definite double A-side. *LL*

**CAPONE TUDOR ROSE (SHIMON RMX) *Hardleaders/UK/12***

Shimon gets nastier than a New Orleans stripper on this remix of the Capone classic. Multiple breaks patterns melt and smash into one another but always returning to a harsh one-two rhythm, while grit, noise, rave stabs and the twinkling, courtly pianos of the original sink into the mix. The classic “Fuzion” gets repressed on the b-side. One for the mosh pit massive. *Star Eyes*

**NAT CLARXON (N.J.C.) DHOLI RUNNER *Function/UK/12***

Coming on strong in the past year, Nat Clarxon (a.k.a. N.J.C.) drops a pair that proves the buzz is well deserved. Check the Hindi-influenced “Dholi Runner” before hitting the analog-driven flip, “Island,” for a glimpse at Nat's unique take on percussion. When you're ready to really start moving, dip into the Cosmic Web label, where Nat turns it up a notch, dropping jaws on the crossover killer “Gangsters Life” before easing into the heavy-duty “Longness.” Centered on smoking beats, ill vocal stabs and an irresistibly chunky b-line, Nat knocks shit straight out of ballpark once again, proving he's here to stay. *Chris Muniz*

**GABRIEL HORRORSHOW V.I.P. *X-Factor/UK/12***

Southern Cali's Gabriel debuts with a pair of hair-raising creepers for Loxy & Ink's X-Factor imprint. “Encounter” on the flipside shakes it up steadily for the early-morning head-nodders, while “Horrorshow V.I.P.” brings on the proper primetime pain. Taking a mental approach to the twisted soundscapes that swirl in the background, Gabriel knocks out tough, hard-hitting beats before the worms come alive, and the bot-tom-end starts punching and kicking like a beast aching for release. Impressive. *Chris Muniz*

**HARDWARE CHRONICLES VOL. 2 *Renegade Hardware/UK/12***

Mean, dark, dancefloor aggression awaits on this four-tracker. Dylan & Friction grab their balls on



Lookin' for spare change: Rat's Ollie Kline atop Dee Kline

**BREAKBEAT LABEL PROFILE: RAT RECORDS**

You who bemoan the lack of soulful gutsiness in breakbeat as it continues its slide into the house and trance swamps should thank your lucky stars for labels like Rat Records. Rat has become one of the few imprints in the genre doing it on their own terms by sloshing up their beats with a street-wise blend of elements from garage, hip-hop and drum & bass. Formed in 1998 by Nick Ender (DJ Dee Kline) and producer Donna Dee, Rat launched with Ender's underground hit “Don't Smoke” which, with it's “I don't smoke the reefa” hook—sold a surprising 20,000 copies before it was licensed by East West and moved 100,000 more. As new label manager

Ollie Kline snickers, “The tune is widely credited with saving the lives of many kids who would have become hopeless drug addicts had Rat not intervened.” East West also picked up Dee's second Rat release, “Sexy Cinderella,” and those successes—along with Ender's exhausting DJ tour schedule—have helped keep Rat expanding in the spotlight. Besides releasing jumping breakbeat joints by playas from other genres (like DJ Abstract's “Beyond This World” and MC Skibadee's “Man-A-Man”), the crew's established the Hardcore Beats subsidiary to release more tear-out, d&b-influenced breaks like Wesley Jay and Shimano's stuttering classic “Bad Boy DJ.” And the journey's far from over: Dee Kline and Ollie Kline have just released *Hardcore Beats*, a survey of the current grimy underground scene that features cuts by Hype, Aquasky and Shut Up and Dance, hosted by the Ragga Twins. Look out also for the crunked-up collective EP “Booty Bouncers Vol. 1” and the “Housebreakers” EP, an electro/hip-hop beat collab between house producer Jeremy Sylvester and Basement Jaxx percussionist Nathan Drake. *Ron Nachmann*

[www.ratrecords.info](http://www.ratrecords.info)

**CIRCUIT BREAKER & DECKART SUPA! *Viper Jive/GER/12***

Berlin boy Jochem Breaker follows up the red-hot “I Tell the DJ” on Dangerous Drums with this funky-ass collab with his man Deckart (of Fab Factory) for his own Viper Jive imprint. The title track nicely sprinkles a Supercat sample throughout a driving, keyboard-infused, classic-sounding breakbeat jam, while the flip's “Stabbin'” unfolds the breaks to a jumpy, more old-school 4/4 mode, done with a solid, studied panache. *Ron Nachmann*

**DJ LOVE CONTACT: THE REMIXES *Stellar Music/UK/2X12***

Most of us have never heard the 1998 original of this Brit producer's midtempo scratch/sample-heavy breakbeat jam, but it's damn tight, well-structured and included on this double-pack. You also get a decent uptempo remix by Love himself, alongside a standard nu-breaks rub by Scissorskicks. But stand back for the one like Stabilizer, who throws down some ROUGH dancehall riddim patterns. That mix is worth the price of admission alone. *Walker Lindh*

**GEENEUS THE JOURNEY REMIX *Motion/UK/12***

Oris Jay presents a different side of himself on his remix of East London baddie Geeneus's jam, drumming up a thumpy bit of breakstep, with a two-note bassline and an unstable-voice keyboard line in the breakdown. On the flip, Shimano's remix brings a classy drum & bass feel. Well done. *Ron Nachmann*

**KLAUS BIG MAN *Botchit/UK/12***

Breakbeat veteran and half of 2Sinners, Klaus Hill goes solo for the Botchit squad, bringing a title track that smacks right out of its sci-fi intro to offer midtempo funk beats peppered with sharp rhythm guitar stabs and touches of rave synth. The flipside's “Stoned Feet,” also midtempo, stays with the cyber stuff, but retains a sense of simplicity. *Walker Lindh*

**PLASTICMAN SPRING ROLLER *Fatale Attraction/UK/12***

Comin' straight outta muthafuckin' Thornton Heath (why don't East London 'hood names sound menacing?), Plasticman puts down a scorcher for BBC 1Xtra garage DJ Femme Fatale's newly established imprint. And if you expected anything less than a boomer, stand back, as your boy throws down a melange of whumping bass, shrill, chattering high-end chords, and hyper crowd barks over a springy, electro-ish riddim. In short, pure pleasure from this bad man. *Easy Snapping*

**SLAUGHTER MOB SADDAM *Souija/UK/12***

That the Mob seem to have rather carelessly titled a Mideast-flavored grimage track after one of the few Arab names many Westerners know can be overlooked, cuz, well, it's bad-ass. That floating flute, that mega-shuffling riddim, that brapping bass...who can resist? Same goes for the soundclash sample-infected dancehall twister “Dub Weapon,” the stripped-down and subdued “Thriller Funk,” and the creeping speed-dub of “Zombie.” An auspicious UK garage debut, to say the least. *Ron Nachmann*

**TARGET FEAT. WILEY PICK YOURSELF UP *Aim High/UK/12***

Keep lookin' over your shoulder, cuz Wiley's becoming the most ubiquitous MC on the UK garage scene, as shown on these two high-quality half-time jams. Over the plucked and rubbed strings that add drama to both these slabs, young Wiles offers some motivational ish (“Ya can't be doing nothing and think you're getting something”) for Target's “Pick Yourself Up” and humbly notes, “I be the coldest tiger” in his conversational move against the haters, “They Will Not Like You.” Make way for dis man. *Easy Snapping*

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DJ FOOD, LUKE VEERT, DJ VADIM, AMON TOBIN, KID KOALA, FUNKI PORCINI, CINEMATIC ORCHESTRA, COLDCUT, MR. SCRUFF, FOG and more.

Double CD / Triple LP label retrospective gathering all top remixes from the likes of CORNELIUS, SQUAREPUSHER, FOURTET, MANITOBA, LUKE VEERT, ASHLEY BEEDLE, SIXTOO, DR. ROCKIT, DJ FOOD and more.

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"Now, when two people love each other very much...": DJ Dick

**LEFTFIELD GUEST REVIEWS: DJ DICK**

What would Britain's new-dub scene be without Richard Whittingham a.k.a. DJ Dick? A Birmingham-based DJ with 20 years of experience in the punk, rare groove and acid house scenes, Whittingham and Glynn "Bigga" Bush started recording sophisticated dub hybrids as Original Rockers in the early '90s. Renaming themselves Rockers Hi-Fi, the two reconfigured Jamaican dub traditions for '90s-era European dancefloors via seminal singles like "What a Life," albums like *Rockers to Rockers*, and remixes of Sly and Robbie, Tosca, Ennio Morricone and Ella Fitzgerald. They also started the Different Drummer label, on which they've released influential compilations like *Bastard Tracks* and *Music is Immortal*. Whittingham has guided the label into its eleventh year with dubwise releases by Noiseshaper and Groove Corporation, alongside more experimental electronica by artists like Painted Van and Mighty Math. Upcoming DD releases include *Nothing to Prove*, the debut album by Overproof Soundsystem; *Plans for a Modern City*, the debut album by seven piece acoustic ambient band Dollboy; and a reissue of the "Amigo" EP by Pork Records artist Momma Gravy. Between vinyl pressing and the two weekly Different Drummer nights he curates at Birmingham's Medicine Bar, it's a wonder he found time to school ya on what's making the dance ram. *Ron Nachmann*

**PAUL MURPHY 7 SAMURAI**

*Afro Art Records/UK/12*  
No one will ignore this track when it's played in a club or on the radio—it stands out a mile! It's a version of the theme from the 1954 Akira Kurosawa classic *The Seven Samurai*, and features former Freakpower frontman Ashley Slater on trombone, who puts in a performance that would make Don Drummond proud. This is a cinematic, percussive, skanking monster...and a beautiful one at that! *DJD*

**SCRAPPY OFF THE LEAD**

*Doghouse/UK/12*  
Scrappy (better known as Blowfelt) delivers a 10" EP that's a cauldron of funk, Motown, hip-hop and dub, which I'm sure has been inspired by plenty of tokes on the funny cigs! When listening to this record, I have visions of King Tubby and Jean Jacques Perrey getting down inna Kingston. Solid! *DJD*

**STEREOTYP MEETS AL-HACA SOUND SYSTEM PHASE 1**

*Klein Records/AUST/12*  
A long-time collaboration between Stereotyp from Vienna and Al-Haca Soundsystem from Greiswald in northeast Germany has given birth to this EP of top-class futuristic dancehall. Guest appearances from heavyweight vocalists Lady Saw on "Latelly," Hawkeye on "Boss It," Shagon (Afrodolitics), Nadja & Hubert Tubbs on "Blaze n Cook" and ROM out of Brooklyn on "Watch Me Flip." Music that pushes the boundaries—just the way we like it! *DJD*

**BEANS NOW SOON SOMEDAY EP**

*Warp/US/CD*  
In which our favorite Afro-futurist MC and avatar of new-school roots style gives us five new explorations in cultural commentary and minimalist electro-hop. You also get a few remixes courtesy El-P and Prefuse 73, the best of which is the razor sharp, not-so optimistic breakdown "Composition in Void"—though picking one ain't easy. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

**BUS KEEP LIFE RIGHT**

*~scape/US/12*  
Following 2001's brilliant "Westen" 12", Daniel Meteo and Tom Thiel, like much of the ~scape roster, have opted to add a dash of hip-hop to their buoyant tech-dub. MC Soom T toasts both sides like a junior Ms. Dynamite over laidback propulsion. But it's the instrumental of the title track that satisfies most. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

**COH ELECTRIC ELECTRIC**

*Mega/AUST/12*  
Ivan Pavlov's COH project usually sounds like the tone and minimalist experiments on 12K or Raster-Noton, but "Electric Electric" kicks some Detroit-electro ass with the best of them! "Dog Dynamo" is off the races like Hawtin, with a punishing 32nd-note undulating bass rhythm

that breaks down mid-breath then picks back up with a flurry of tone-pulses on "KOCMOC." All of which goes to prove that experimental is closer to the floor than most like to admit. *Heath K. Hignight*

**K.I.M. KIM KONG**

*Tigersushi/FRA/12*  
How does reputedly mysterious freak-cult K.I.M. top a noisy, shuffling, 3/4 time '80s-ish remix by Chicken Lips' Andy Meecham of their breathy disco/EBM insta-classic "Kim Kong"? Simple: by sticking the crunchy, desperate "Sex Beat" from 1981 by L.A. punk idols Gun Club on the vinyl as an extra track. Now you're talkin' some outside shit. *Ron Nachmann*

**MONOLAKE CERN [EDIT]**

*Monolake/GER/12*  
Techno's rudiments remain unsafe in the coldly calculating hands of Robert Henke, as he's shown on his recent *Momentum* full-length. Here, he does the DJ a favor by offering up both a longer edit of the drum-&-bass-tempo "Cern" on the title track, and a flipside expansion of "White," which adds another breakdown or two to the icy, crumbling, minimalist proceedings. Sublime. *Ron Nachmann*

**RAMMELLZEE CHEESY LIPSTICK**

*Headman SO THEN!*  
*Gomma/GER/7, 12*  
Munich tweaker label Gomma keeps bringing the spirit of late '70s NYC. Backed by chaos-wave duo Munk, New York's veteran extraterrestrial anti-hip-hopper Rammellzee mowls, growls and JB's his way through two cathartic bits of skronk on his 45. Meanwhile, Swiss duo Headman offers up slashing, dramatic guitar lines over synth-touched punk-funk in two parts—only the Swiss can make something this chunky come out like clockwork. *Ron Nachmann*

**SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO BOAT RACE**

*white/UK/12*  
On this one-sided, white-labeled slab of perfection, Simian transforms last year's creative apex of the magnificent *We Are Your Friends* full-length into a diving board into the raucous depths of dancefloor destruction. This taut, bleepy, punky, electro-rock number is replete with skanking bassline and the boys shouting the title. Relentlessly effective, resplendently dedicated to its own singular sound, fresher than the majority of the post-punk rip-off bands out there—within minutes you'll be shouting along, "Boat Race, Boat Race!" *Brion Paul!*

**TUSSELE DON'T STOP EP**

*Troubleman Unlimited/US/12, CD*  
Already grooving as well as Neu! or Konk, this kraut-no-wave-surfing quartet follows up its "Eye Contact" single with two other savory tunes and their remixes. "Don't Stop" gets a stripped-down, Lower East Side workout from Death Comet Crew's Stuart Argabright, while "Windmill" the motorik dual-bassline desert-drive disco chug gets a dub-disco freakout from Matmos's Drew Daniel. An album from these guys is gonna mean lights-out for a lot of you wankers. *Ron Nachmann*

**IKEN IMAGE OF A DRAWN SWORD**

*Real Soon/UK/10*  
East English knob twiddler Iken catches you off-guard by infusing a midtempo techno rhythm with some stumbling beats and a bluesy piano riff for the title track of this 10-inch. Flip it and you get the easy quasi-schaffel of "Early Light" and the industrial-age chamber music of Estuary. Really lovely stuff. *Ron Nachmann*

**SONICTERROR RECORDS**  
WWW.SONICTERROR.NET

**Enduser**  
Wreckin' Shit EP 12" [ST006]  
"A splatterfest for jungle warfare fiends, headfuck specialist Enduser is certifiably insane: long may he rock. Sick to the core, jungle madness, the perfect soundtrack to lose my mind."  
— The Bug 2003

**Rusuden**  
Formulae CD [ST007]  
"Formulae reaches through infinite depths of the ocean and extracts a species of digitally enhanced marine grooves that haven't been heard or seen before. The fragile, watery sounds of Rusuden is in full effect."  
— Igloo Magazine 2003

**Various Artists**  
You Know How We Do 12" [ST006]  
Featuring exclusive tracks from Line 47, Enduser, Jerome Spye, Ill Cosby, Zwingli and Rusuden.  
"A brilliant sampling of the best new music by the slightly brain damaged future of music!"  
— Donna Summer 2003

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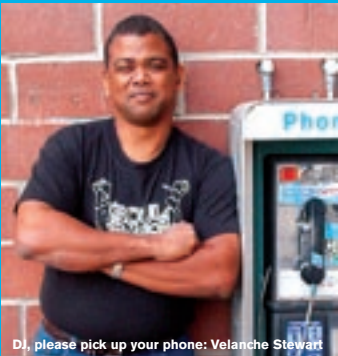
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DJ, please pick up your phone: Velanche Stewart

**FUTURE JAZZ GUEST REVIEWS: VELANCHE STEWART**

Those in the know have a mental list of cities where future jazz and new, soulful club culture have taken hold, including West London, Munich and Paris. But how about the elite, mid-sized central Californian coastal town of San Luis Obispo? Believe. For the past six years, that's the spot from which DJ Velanche Stewart has been producing and hosting Urban Landscapes, a weekly show dedicated to the rhythmic good-good emanating from around the world. Airing the show on Friday nights from 9-11 p.m. PST on the Cal Poly State University

station KCPR 91.3 FM (with live net streams at [www.kcpr.org](http://www.kcpr.org)), Stewart regularly rolls out mean sets that encompass downtempo, deep house, dub, broken beat and everything in between. He's also aired interviews with figures like Ayro, Atjazz and J. Swinscoe, as well as a special on Switzerland's Gonkyburg scene. Furthermore, Stewart and Jivari Soundtribe (a local DJ collective) have begun to put together parties in SLO, and the man's set to take up various invites from around the world to tour in '04. But while he might hit the road, you'll always be able to check audio archives and playlists for Urban Landscapes at [www.urban-landscapesshow.com](http://www.urban-landscapesshow.com). *Ron Nachmann*

**BURUMAN KEP TRACK EP Flyin' High/NETH/12**

This second release from the Flyin' High label (fronted by the MFP Collective) is mmm-mmm good! The original version sports warm keys, basslines that go from syncopated to spacey, and an overall jazzy vibe. Aardvark remixes the track into a minimalist, atmospheric broken-beat groover with a deep rolling bassline—this one is for the heads. *VS*

**ENNIO MORRICONE REMIXES VOL. 2 EP Compost/GER/12**

Volume 2 of Compost's well-produced *Ennio Morricone Remixes* project is just around the corner, and this teaser features goodness from Eddy & Dus, Computerjockeys and Chicken Lips. Hats off to Michael Reinboth and crew, and respect to Mr. Mooooo-ri-co-nee (as put oh-so-nicely in International Pony's catchy pop salute in *Volume 1*). Seek. *VS*

**MOKADI CHICA DA IÇI Perfect Toy/GER/12**

This 12" keeps Germany's Perfect Toy on the right track, with playful instrumentation and enchanting vocals from Dita von Aster. With production from Ralph Kiefer (ex-Hipnosis) and Marc Frank (from Les Gamma), "Chica da Içi" is a splendid delight. The flip, the trio's cover of Trane's "My Favorite Things," is a good take on the classic. But I'm still smitten by the a-side, and it just might put a big stupid smile on your face. *VS*

**AUDIOMONTAGE THE LIGHTNESS**

*Freerange/UK/12*  
Jamie "Jimpster" O'Dell saves his most Afro-Latin percussive titles for releases as Audiomontage, but still manages to vacuum-seal them with hippo-fat house rhythms and anaconda bass lines. "The Lightness" is doused in Rhodes rainbow light with butterfly flutes fluttering through its misty percussive rainforest timber. "The Darkness" is the edgy side of nightfall in the jungle. Take a guide. *Tomas*

**DA LATA CHANGE**

*Palm-Especial Distribution/JPN/12*  
**JAZZTRONIK DANCE WITH ME**  
*Especial/JPN/12*  
Brazil-crazy Brits Da Lata's fiery Japan-only single "Change" is a feverish, choppy, jazz bungle that saves space for tight boy/girl vocals but never forgets to lay out hot percussion solos. Nina Miranda's bonus ballad "Petropolis" is an Astrid Gilberto elegy minus the cocktails. I'm naming my first son Jazztronik if they keep delivering broken beat dancefloor bombs like "Dance" and b-side "Samurai" Soundclash sirens, dynamic piano chords and vocal scats make them sizzle. *Tomas*

**DOUBLE HELIX FUNXTILES**

*Rush Hour/NETH/12*  
Dancefloor DNA to modify your defective genetic steps, courtesy of Helix's twisting layers of offbeat ambient-electronics. Harkening back to early-'90s SF and Detroit tech-dance sounds, these three tracks pine for simpler times. Add gorgeous chords and delicate percussion, and you've got essential audio art. *Derek Grey*

**FLOWRIDERS DIFFERENT SPACES**

*4Lux/NETH/12*  
The boys from Amsterdam sure know what they're doing, as evidenced by this top release from the live band Flowriders. While the original

is plenty strong in a Nu Spirit Helsinki vein, Gerd turns it up a notch with a thick-bottomed space jazz excursion. But for the serious dancefloor business, Alex "Bugz In The Attic" Phountzi strips it down to the bare, broken essentials with superb results. *Peter Nicholson*

**NICK HOLDER NO MORE DATING DJS**

*NRK/UK/12*  
This officially replaces LCD Soundsystem's "Losing My Edge" as dance music's best sardonic critique. Why? The poetess Jemeni dead-pans, "I'm done with dating rappers, MCs, DJs, producers/I'm looking for a real nice Rogers Cable guy who thinks a Technic is a way to way to make love to me." And "No, I don't want to hang out with the other DJ-girlfriends/they're adapters/automatic after-performance clappers/Preparation H for swollen-ego asshole rappers." Case closed. *Derek Grey*

**LOVE AND SALT UN TOUR DU MONDE**

*Damara/UK/12*  
Sounds like a Bar Rumba winter anthem to me: soulful keyboardist Jessica Lauren and Resident Filter's Justin Morey deliver a shuffling, midtempo Afrobeat gem. On the mic, Martinique's MC Stamina Li directs the tour (in French) through Nigeria 70-style bumps with Lauren's steady and sensuous organ vamps smoothing out the ride. Buy two copies and a map. *Tomas*

**FRANCISCO MORA AMAZONA**

*Kindred Spirits/NETH/12*  
Mora is that groovy Sun Ra Arkestra drummer who applies Big Band skills to this lively Latin/bossa jazz number lead by an amazing interstellar brass section, blazing fingers on black and white keys and nimble timbale thwacks. Detroit astronomer Carl Craig picks up where he left off on his Pepe Braddock "Angola" remix with a similarly sublime, unhurried edit. Practically gospel. *Tomas*



"Living well is the best revenge."—1970's divorce mantra

Last year started off well enough, I suppose. But between the Bush War, California's Governor, and a heap of crushing personal defeats at the hand of God, women, health and the streets, I, for one, am damn glad to see the end of 2003. Waking up one afternoon, I realized that I had gone feral, with my beard developing its own weather patterns, and I could be found holding long, scent-based conversations with my friends Skunk and Possum in the shrubbery around the homestead. Hardly a good sign for a supposed *bon vivant* and admitted social animal.

The clippers came out of hiding, as did Dr. Bronner's magic eucalyptus soap, and soon I was cavorting around town with Justin Credible of the Space Cowgirls, and wrassling down the hills with DJ Swingsett in a Jim Beam-and-skateboarding-fueled frenzy of violence and love. Fun and good humor had returned, and riding the F Market streetcars to nowhere in particular became a perfect way to spend an evening: just riding and thinking and smiling like a fool, happy as a clam in my rainy City, humming James Gang tunes and waving at friends in the street. Time for a few resolutions, as the season allows...

I promise to talk to that impossibly hot little punk rock chick at the drugstore on West Portal. (Sometimes I think all I need to really make me happy is a cute little skinhead girl to take me home and call me "Boo").

I promise to pass out at Duser's place only once a week. Maybe.

I promise to play Lyrics Born's "Callin' Out" every time I spin, until I'm 4,000 years old, sittin' on my rocking chair, sippin' on gin (props to Aceyalone).

And now, ladies and gentlemen, the first Lucky 13 of 2004, road-tested and Dalva-approved...

1) **CHRIS LOWE THE BLACK LIFE** (*Female Fun/US/CD*) Are you kidding me?! This is the hottest shit I've heard in days. Fat, FAT jazz breaks and party tracks by ol' school vet Chris Lowe with pals Large Pro, PMD, Cash Money and more. Hailing from the ghetto-fabulous hotbed of Arcata, CA, Female Fun is the record company that boldly considers what would happen "if Parker Posey was a rap label." Grab the 12" and peep more by J. Rawls, DJ Spinna, and that mysterious genius MF Doom...

2) **GET THE HATER GET THE HATER** (*Records To The Neck/US/LP*) Give thanks that DJ Marz is crazy enough to make and put out music this twisted. Get The Hater is Marz (of the Space Travelz), Luke Sick from the drunken Sacred Hoop, and Blag the Ripper from the legendary Dwarves. Say no more. Somebody get these guys some drugs. And a cocktail on me.

3) **THE BEAT KIDS "LIFE IS JUGGLE (FEAT. SADAT X)"** (*7 Heads-Uncle Junior/US/12*) Bubbly, heavy electro (what?!) that could be Luke Vibert on a good day, with one of my favorite rappers of all time, the mighty Sadat X of Brand Nubian fame.

4) **TRUNK AND DEBBIE "SHINIGURAI"/"WHAT SIDE YOU ON"** (*Awful Nice/US/7*) High weirdness inna shadowy dub-stylee on a split single from this Arizona label. Trunk's track sounds like classic NYC illbience, and could go on for three more days, in my book.

5) **SUPERBACANA "SUPERBACANA"** (*Listen! Music/US/EP*)  
Hotness straight out of the Mission District. SF's Superbacana has been tearing up spots like the Elbo Room for a few years now. Here, they kill Baden Powell's "Canto De Ossanha" as well as Sade's "Paradise," and offer up the lovely original "Era Verdade". Maximum floortime.



6) **JACKIE'S ARMY "MURTER"** (*Voltage/US/12*) It's rare you actually hear good music around the office, but imagine my pleasant surprise when the other day, as I was trolling for interns around the mailroom, I hear this wicked bastard slaughtering the bassbins! Shockmann & Smith, rocking all dancefloors with a bad-ass nouveau-electro slang.

7) **DR. RUBBERFUNK THE FIRST CUT** (*Funkydown/UK/2xLP*) It's OK to eat leftovers if they come from Mr. Scruff's plate. That guy threw down "Bossa For The Devil" from this album at our gig together with DJ Spinna, and I practically stole it off the damn turntable. Now I call people at four in the morning, drunk on brandy, and play this for them over the phone. "That's great, Toph. Leave me the hell alone!"

8) **SOUND KLASH AMMO "DUB PLATE BLENDS AND BREAKS VOL. 1"** (*Deadly Mix/US/EP*) Pirate DJ kingpin Rolo 1-3 kills it remix stylee on this underground gem. Find it soon. Buy two.

9) **CHRIS JOSS "THE GNOMES"** (*Irma On Canvas/US/12*) You know those times when everyone on the dancefloor just absolutely loses they shit? Fools on the bar, hands in the air, motherfuckers partying like it's 1992? And it's seven in the morning? This is that track. Sick, fucked-up booty music to shake that ass.

10) **TREVA WHATEVA "DANCE CLASS EP"** (*Ninja Tune/UK/EP*) Could this be the third leg in the Tim "Love" Lee/Mr. Scruff trilogy? Jazzy Latin bounce with enough bass to scare an elephant. "Havana Ball" is the bomb, hands down.

11) **GIFT OF GAB "THE WRITZ"** (*Quannum/US/12*) Everyone is bugging off "The Writz" but as usual, I'll take the b-side, "Just Because," and live in my own strange little world. And while we're on the subject, how about the new HIERO b-side, "LET IT ROLL"? Wow.

12) **8.BLISS A TRAIN OF EVENTS** (*Omnipresent/US/CD*) Extremely personal poetry and philosophy on life, family and existence from my vegan buddy 8.Bliss over beats by exACTO and DJ Denizen. Try to peep the DVD, too, filmed in downtown San Francisco and screened at various film festivals around the way.

**LUCKY 13) SAUL WILLIAMS SAID THE SHOTGUN TO THE HEAD** (*Pocket Books-MTV/US/book*)

Moments of sheer, frightening beauty from the acclaimed spoken-word fellow and writer and star of the movie *Slam*.



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## IN THE STUDIO AGF

AGF BRINGS INTUITION, EXPERIENCE AND LANGUAGE TOGETHER IN INTRICATE, GLITCHY SOUND DESIGNS.  
TEXT MELISSA WHEELER IMAGE MARYSE LARIVIÈRE

Championing technology's power to communicate imagination, Berlin's Antye Greie-Fuchs (who records as Laub and AGF) knows a thing or two about innovative composition. Fuchs is part of a four-woman laptop group called Lappettes whose members collaborate from Paris, London, Tokyo and Berlin. As part of the experimental pop duo Laub she twisted Western pop tradition while singing in German, and on her first solo album she read programming code as lyrics over glitchy noises. Her new album, *Westernization Completed* (on SF's Orthlorng Musork), is adamantly propelled by the same unique streak. Accompanied by a 20-page hardcover mini-book of art, fashion and graphic design, the album offers ultra-personal lyrics (in English), made that much more private by sparse and melodic compositions that challenge traditional song structures. While she cooked Thai food at home, we talked to her about the process of making such an intimate and challenging work.

### **XLR8R:** What gear and software do you use in the studio?

**AGF:** I have a Mac G4. I use Logic to sequence and edit, and I work with an MPC, an AKAI 2000x1 sequencer sampler, which usually hip-hoppers use. I like it because it has these huge pads, and you can play them quite intuitively. I also use different software for processing like Max MSP. [I also use] my voice, which isn't gear but it's a big ingredient of my music.

### **XLR8R:** I know you travel a lot and you work on the road. How are your compositions affected by your location?

**AGF:** [Sometimes] on the road [it's hard] to ignore, at a certain point, the excitement and the new surroundings. For example, being able to work on a plane really takes a lot of discipline—writing lyrics, especially. Like on the recent album there are a few parts that express my desire to go to Asian [locales] or be fascinated by them. *Westernization Completed* is really communicative. I really want to communicate with all the people I met during the last few years. They [seem to] appreciate me for [the] German language [aspect of my work], or for [its] non-language trademark. Some people I met [on tour] had all my records. When I signed their records, I asked them, 'Hey, don't you want to know what I'm singing about on this record?'. And they said no. They liked the mystery of it, and they don't even want to know. I think this new record is telling about where I come from, and does a little bit of explaining of myself too.

### **XLR8R:** I read that when you were 13 you started playing guitar, and at 15 you started writing your own songs. At what point did you start using computer-based programs to make your music?

**AGF:** After the Wall came down in 1993 I decided to go to London for a while. I was a little bit lost for a couple of years; the new system and the new circumstances knocked me out. Then, when I was 23, I thought, 'Shit, I've got to get going with my life and either start studying something or start to get my dream of being a musician realized.' So I went to London and bought my first computer—an old Commodore 64—and my first keyboard and a little synthesizer.

### **XLR8R:** In your booklet you credit the designer Uli Dziallas, the artist Ulyana Gumeniuk and the graphic designer Kim West. Why was it important for you to do the book with the album?

**AGF:** On one hand I tried to concentrate on the music, but [similarly] also the artwork because of my communication with these artists. I was talking to this painter and this fashion designer all the time during my record and we came up with the same problems in our art. When do you finish a painting or when do you finish a song? It was really important for me to have this exchange with these girls, and from the very beginning I felt like I would like to represent them in my work, support them, and kind of participate. The work I do is super fucking personal—the music is all done by me, and nobody did anything to it. And I thought to do the booklet to not be too trapped in myself.

Check AGF's site at [www.poemproducer.com](http://www.poemproducer.com).



In AGF's studio (clockwise from left): Mac G4, Logic screenshot, Akai MPC 2000XL, Max/MSP screenshot

## MIX MASTER M

It's a crucial moment in the development of your little home studio—the day you decide to add a mixing desk to your setup. You've held off on a mixing desk because you couldn't afford those expensive programs for recording audio into your computer, or because, frankly, you've run out of space in the room.

Far be it from you to sell your vintage Japanese Power Rangers collectable action figure set, discard the stacks of riot grrrrl fanzines or, erp, any of those 10,000 12" singles stacked against the wall. Enter the **Edirol M-100FX** mini-mixer. Although primarily targeted at video sound editors and vocal presentations, this is an affordable desk for electronic musicians of all kinds.

First thing to know: it's small. This is a plus in a cramped studio, but it also means only so many channels fit on its surface. The M-100FX has six channels total, two dedicated exclusively for vocal recordings. What's to like? The variety of input sources—perfect for recording sound in or out from MiniDisc, tape decks, CD players or turntables. There's plenty of RCA and 1/4" phono jacks for all the little gadgety shite you've collected from Radio Shack or the pawnshop over the years.

The "FX" part of the Edirol mixer refers to a number of fairly boring effects built into the mixer. Sorry to offend anyone, but they're weak—weak not only in their output levels and parameters, but weak because they're the same reverb, delay and plate effects that any serious music program already has built in. You could do more to your mixes by simply attaching a Kaoss pad or other outboard effects unit through the 100FX's send and return slots.

On the flip side, the best reason to seriously consider this mixer is its useful USB cable input. This allows you to play sound directly out of your computer through the mixer (thereby tweaking your sounds even more), or to record



voice, instruments or other noises directly into Logic, Nuendo or other music recording software. That's right, the mixer does the analog to digital sound processing for you, something you would pay an extra \$200 bucks for another device to do if you bought a standard mixer.

Would I recommend buying the Edirol M100-FX? Sure. Would a serious producer outgrow its six channels? Possibly. Overall, the unit is suitable for the beginning producer who wants to blend a bunch of different sources together, or a musician needing multiple sound inputs for a live performance. Even still, it won't clean up your studio for you. *Tomas*

Edirol M-100FX, MSRP: \$495; [www.edirol.com](http://www.edirol.com)



## CORRECT TECHNIQUES

As **Technics** releases the 30th Anniversary **1200/1210 MK5** edition of their legendary 1200 turntable, we'd like to take a moment to ponder the finer points, modifications and other cool-ass shit going on with the most influential instrument of the last three decades. Firstly, the MK5 comes out strong, improving on the MK2/MK3 design with subtle new features: an improved tonearm for scratching, improved torque, customizable braking speeds, and expanded computer controlled (and resettable) pitch control options up to 16 percent, among other features.

What happened to the MK4, you ask? While not released in the US, the MK4 had other features that should have been included on the MK5, such as 78rpm playing speed and removable, gold-plated RCA connectors.

While companies like Vestax, Numark and Stanton continually try to improve on the classic design of the Technics 1200 MKII, adding a variety of (often quite bad-ass) additions to the popular direct-drive turntable formula, MixMachines is attempting to upgrade the actual classic itself. This one is sure to make you drool, though it's not out quite yet. It's the Kingston Dubplate Cutter—a modification designed to turn your existing 1200 MKII into a vinyl-pressing machine, with an additional rackmount for setting volumes, etc. You can cut your own records using traditional dubplates or their special plates (which are even scratchable). Imagine delivering your own remixes straight to the dancefloor the day they are made, and dub cutting from the comfort of your own home!

Equally cool is MixMachines' Reverse Wheel, a modification allowing your Technics to play in reverse with just a double click of the start and stop button—and you can do the mod easily yourself. Whatever your choice of weaponry, remember who started it. Technics is still the king. *Jesse Terry*

Technics 1210 MK5 MSRP: \$699; [www.technics1210.com](http://www.technics1210.com)

Kingston Dubplate Cutter MSRP: \$5,500; [www.vinylum.com](http://www.vinylum.com)

## QUICKIE

### MACMUSIC.ORG

The Mac Music Team is a virtual community that pooled their brains and resources to present what's probably the most comprehensive database out there for Mac users. Here's a mere sampling of what can be found on the site: advice ranging from the exact definition of a plug-in to whether or not you should choose Korg, Roland or EMU as a first synth; in-depth articles on Moog Modular V and working in the parameters of Logic; links to thousands of gear reviews, classified pages and chart reviews; upcoming news on the latest software and the current state of the Powermac G4. *Jenn Marston*

**PROS:** Whether you're interested in hosting your tunes or you want an in-depth comparison between Cubase SE and Cubase SX, this is, hands down, the place to look to for what seems like an infinite amount of quality information.

**CONS:** Because of this wealth of information the site is very plain and, if you're a beginner, can seem rather daunting in terms of navigability.

[www.macmusic.org](http://www.macmusic.org)

## BACK THAT AZZ UP!

Back in "ye olden days" (namely, the '70s), losing a recording session was much more interesting—Bob Marley's engineer dropping a red-hot ember from a joint onto a tape during a splicing session comes to mind. These days, losing your track is a lot more mundane, and much more common thanks to the advent of the computer crash.

Backing up and cleaning up your drive is crucial to a sane computer. There are a few ways to go about the backup—an external hard drive (many of which retail for as low as \$150) is the easiest and fastest way, although zip disks, CDRs and DVDs are a good bet. For a recent 20-gigabyte backup, I FireWired my Powerbook G4 to a computer with a DVD burner, and made double copies of four 5-gig discs. Computers run smoother when the hard drive isn't close to full. Get rid of some of those MP3s, especially .aiff and .wav files—they can take up way too much space and often just sit around on your drive.

It's important to learn your audio sequencing software—some programs will leave audio on your hard drive even if it appears that you have erased it. Cubase 4.1 left my Mac with nearly 10 gigs of false-start recordings. I hadn't realized when I started out recording that you need to delete events in the audio pool as well as the sequencer window. Many programs have a feature that lets you minimize your file, deleting all unnecessary files while keeping those needed for a song to function. But Propellerhead Reason users beware—if you want to save a file with external samples (.rex files or sounds), you need to save it with "Self Contain Settings," located in your menu bar under File.

After backing up your files, defragmenting your hard drive is a good step, as it organizes the space on a drive for better performance. **Alsoft's Disk Warrior** seems to be the most trusted method, as it cleans up music-oriented Macs (OS 9 and X) well. It might seem boring, but you'll curse yourself if you don't do it. *Jesse Terry*

Alsoft Disk Warrior, MSRP: \$79.95; [www.alfsoft.com](http://www.alfsoft.com)







## TINO CONSIDERS KAOSS

A SPECIAL GUEST REVIEW OF KORG'S KAOSS ENTRANCER BY TINO CORP'S BEN STOKES.

After hearing about the **Korg Entrancer** months ago on the web, I finally got my hands on one and was able to monkey around with it.

The Entrancer is the new video/audio effects unit from Korg that can best be described as a Kaoss Pad that also works with video. For those of you not familiar with the Kaoss Pad, it's a wonderful audio effects processor with a tactile pad for touch control of effects. In fact, Brian Eno called the Kaoss Pad his favorite new piece of gear when quizzed on San Francisco radio station KOED.

The Kaoss Entrancer is bigger in size than the standard Kaoss Pad and includes two video inputs and two video outputs, as well as stereo in/out for the sound. Like the Kaoss Pad, the Entrancer has MIDI ins and outs, and can be used as a controller or a MIDI instrument. As a stand-alone unit, you run audio and video through the Entrancer and use the touch pad to mess with both sound and picture.

Until I actually got a hold of this device, I knew as much about it as you know now. Excitedly, I chose a kung-fu movie to play through the Entrancer. I was a little disappointed as I ran through the first several effect presets—they were mostly cheesy video effects that you can find on any switcher these days, accompanied by some standard Kaoss Pad sounds. But then I stumbled onto pre-set number 60, the BPM Loooper. It takes a short sample of the sound and picture, loops it, and then plays it back. As you move your finger over the pad, the loop gets cut in half, quarter, eighths, etc. Remember, this is *both* audio and video! If you get a beat going, you can use the tap tempo button and get the video in sync with any music you're playing. Very cool. My kung-fu movie was looking and sounding much more interesting now.

I flipped through some more presets and my next favorites were numbers 94 through 99, which are all sampling presets. Basically, the Entrancer gives you two six-second audio and video samples. Presets 94 through 99 all play back each sample in a variety of ways. You can "scratch" the sample or loop it really interactive ways by moving your finger across the pad.

Another feature I liked was the Pattern Display—it allows you to achieve an old oscilloscope effect, where an audio waveform reacts to a sound. Also you can run other presets while the Pattern Display is on. The Mute/Freeze button and the Pad Motion functions were also extremely handy. Korg was smart to let users match up different audio effects to each video effect by using a control select switch and setting the eight program memory keys.

Despite its cheesy presets, this unit really is the first of its kind and offers some totally unique features that have never been available in this price range. If you want to integrate audio and video, as more and more people do, you will want to investigate the Entrancer. *Ben Stokes*

Korg Kaoss Entrancer MSRP: \$1,100; [www.korg.com](http://www.korg.com)



## PLOGUE ROCKS

Those of you who are familiar with ReWire functioning on programs like Live, Reason, ProTools, Digital Performer and Cubase already know how useful it can be to connect and sync up the sound, rhythm and functioning of separate audio programs. **Plogue's Bidule** takes the concept a step further, allowing you to create templates to customize the routing of programs, audio, MIDI and inputs/outputs by dragging and dropping objects and cables onto a pallet. The interface is about as pretty as Max/MSP, but it's the functionality that counts. For example, as a user of Live and Reason, I was unhappy with the way I needed to open a separate sequencer if I wanted to use a VST software synthesizer. Using the Plogue Bidule, I can use Live as a master application, and set up pathways for Reason and VST instruments to go to Live as inputs, controlling parameters of all three programs at one time. There are still bugs in the software—it crashed a few times in OSX while trying to get the right routing—but a lot of the problems were due to my own misunderstanding of how ReWire works. And hey, it's free so what is there to complain about? *Jesse Terry*

Plogue Bidule MSRP: Beta is free, 1.0 TBA; [www.plogue.com/bidule](http://www.plogue.com/bidule)

## THE MAIN ARTURIA

Following up on their amazing Moog Modular V application, Arturia has re-introduced a legend in electronic music production in the form of a software synthesizer. Yamaha's original CS-80V was released in the mid-'70s, costing nearly \$7000 and weighing 175 pounds. Arturia's **Arturia CS-80-V** version comes on a CD for Mac and PC, weighing just a few ounces but delivering essentially the same futuristic sounds. Whether you run it on its own or as a plug-in for a sequencer, the CS-80V sounds spectacular. Fans of electric pioneers like Tomita, Vangelis, Ryuichi Sakamoto or Tangerine Dream will feel nostalgic; the Arturia is also the synth used in films like *Blade Runner* and *Dune*. Weird, spaceship sequences and ambient dreamscapes are a breeze to create with the presets, and there are a wide array of strings, organs, pads and lead synths to keep you busy. The basslines are beaten only by those on the Moog Modular V.

Like Arturia's Moog Mod V, the depth of the program and detail of the sound are impressive. In terms of making music, the CS-80V is probably best for ambient beatmaking or film scoring, though it's quite a versatile piece of software. The automation possibilities and fancy updates like independently voiced polyphonic synthesis and customizable circuiting are overwhelming. It all comes down to your personal style. From plug-in players to serious sound synthesicists, it's up to you whether you want to sound like Toto or Aphex Twin. *Jesse Terry*

Arturia CS-80-V MSRP: \$249; [www.arturia.com](http://www.arturia.com)



## ASK ROBOTSPEAK

It's *XLR8R's* x-cellent gear advice column, where you, the reader, put your most confounding questions to the music technology experts at computer music shop RobotSpeak. Got a query about your bedroom studio or DJ gear? Simply send it to: [askrobotspeak@xlr8r.com](mailto:askrobotspeak@xlr8r.com) and your answer will appear in next issue.

Dear RobotSpeak,  
Which of Edirol's (or any similar company's) many controllers would you recommend for a home studio producer like me that wants to take his music live? I use mainly Logic and Reason, plus some Native Instruments programs. I'm looking for quick functions, ease of use live and a short learning curve.

Thanks,  
*Andrew Scarborough, Boulder, CO*

Andrew,  
Fortunately all the current keyboard controllers are pretty easy to program, usually with only a few key-strokes. Better still is that most soft synths "listen" for incoming MIDI controller data, so setting up your synths with a controller usually requires little programming at all. When using multiple apps, however, presets on a controller become helpful. We are big fans of Edirol's PCR line of keyboard controllers—particularly for their above average keyboard feel and inclusion of programmable presets, a godsend for those touting a complex software-based live rig. Something else to consider: when compared to the Midiman keyboards the Edirols have a slightly larger footprint. This can prove a bit frustrating to those users adamant about fitting their entire live rig into a backpack. The Edirol PCR-30 [the most compact of the Edirol line] sports 2 1/2 octaves and 8 faders but tends to be a bit lengthy for the average bag. If size is more of a concern than control, go for the Oxygen 8. And if money isn't a big concern, [ha!] take a look at Novation's 2-octave Remote 25. Complete with 8 rotary potentiometers, 8 sliders, 8 rotary encoders, 24 switches, aftertouch and an x-y axis pad, the solidly built [although pricey at around \$400] Remote25 is unmatched for overall control and silky keyboard feel.

*Alan RobotSpeak*

# ANNOUNCEMENT THE NEW INDUSTRY STANDARD HAS FINALLY ARRIVED



"The **ST/STR8-150** is undeniably a superior turntable to the recently upgraded Technics Mark 5G"

*David Eserin, DJmag review, July 2003*  
5 out of 5 stars



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# GEAR FACTOR 2004 WINTER NAMM

XLR8R TAKES A PEEK AT THE NEWEST MUSIC HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE, DJ GEAR AND HOT AND SEXY TIDBITS DEBUTING AT THIS JANUARY'S NAMM CONVENTION.



Revolutionary performance software, **Ableton's Live 3.0**, is even more robust in its third edition. [www.ableton.com](http://www.ableton.com)



The **Numark CDX** CD turntable, the perfect combination of old interface and new technology, and the rack-mount **PPD9000** mixer. [www.numark.com](http://www.numark.com)



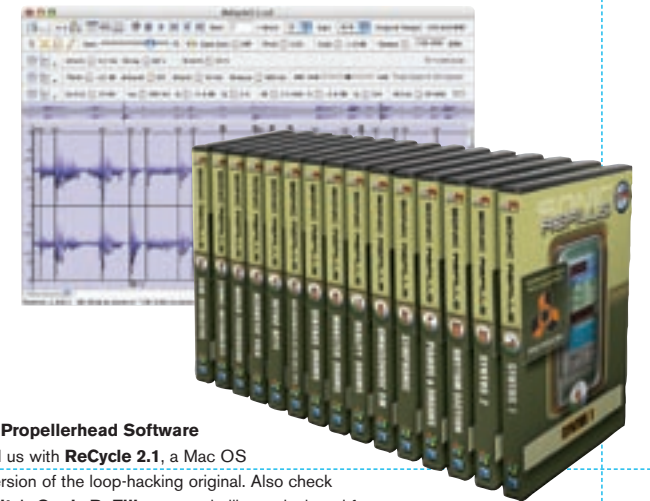
The **microKONTROL** by **Korg** is by far the sexiest controller on the market, with a 3-octave keyboard, 8-sliders and 16 drum pads. [www.korgusa.com](http://www.korgusa.com)



With a small footprint and big power, the **Denon DN-S3000** CD/mp3 player has a huge list of features, and also check the new **DN-X1500** mixer with 8 inputs, sampler and effects. [www.usa.denon.com/dj](http://www.usa.denon.com/dj)



Straight-up features and functionality with **Stanton's STR8-150** turntable and their robust **DJ Pro 3000** headphones. [www.stantondj.com](http://www.stantondj.com)



The folks at **Propellerhead Software** have graced us with **ReCycle 2.1**, a Mac OS X friendly version of the loop-hacking original. Also check **Sonic Reality's Sonic ReFills**, a sample library designed for Propellerhead's Reason. [www.propellerhead.se](http://www.propellerhead.se), [www.sonicreality.com](http://www.sonicreality.com)



After perfecting the CD mixer, **Pioneer** has decided to apply the same technology to DVDs with the **DVJ-X1**. Also witness their new battle mixer, the **DJM-909**. [www.pioneerprodj.com](http://www.pioneerprodj.com)



**Gem Sound** comes correct with the affordable and full-featured **DMX-10900S Pro** mixer and the **WMA-BP** wireless mic. [www.gemsound.com](http://www.gemsound.com)



**Cycling 74's Sustained Encounters** is the first in their series of sample CDs containing audio described as "long evolving environments and unfolding atmospheres." [www.cycling74.com](http://www.cycling74.com)



**M-Audio** always comes with a phat pile of new shiz. Peep the newest additions to their **Pro Sessions** sound library, the **FireWire Audiophile** audio/MIDI interface, **MK-461C**, **MK-425C** and the sexy **UC-33E** controllers. [www.m-audio.com](http://www.m-audio.com)



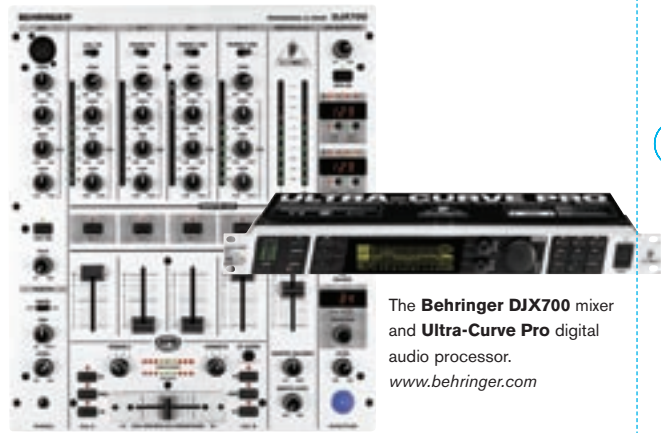
The **PVDJ Grabber** is the ultimate on-the-fly beat sampler and loop machine. [www.pvdj.com](http://www.pvdj.com)



**2004 WINTER NAMM**



Edirol's not joking around with the **PCR-80** and **PCR-A30** controllers, **UA-1X** USB audio interface, and the **UA-1000**, the world's first high-speed USB audio interface. [www.edirol.com](http://www.edirol.com)



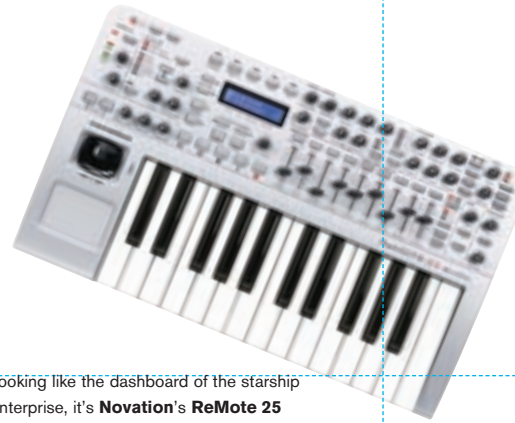
The **Behringer DJX700** mixer and **Ultra-Curve Pro** digital audio processor. [www.behringer.com](http://www.behringer.com)



Magix is offering up a pile of entry-level audio products including their **Audio.Cleaning.Lab.2004**, **mp3.Maker.2004** and **Music.Maker.2004**. [www.magix.com](http://www.magix.com)



The **Allen & Heath Xone:92** mixer looks hot and sounds great. [www.allen-heath.com](http://www.allen-heath.com)



Looking like the dashboard of the starship Enterprise, it's **Novation's ReMote 25** controller. [www.novationmusic.com](http://www.novationmusic.com)

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## VIS-ED TIFFANY BOZIC

PAINTER, ILLUSTRATOR AND, SOME WOULD SAY, GRAPHIC MYSTIC—IT'S EASY TO SEE WHY PEOPLE ARE GRAVITATING TOWARDS **TIFFANY BOZIC**.  
WORDS CARLETON CURTIS

Although she leaves it open to interpretation, the art of Tiffany Bozic is decidedly feminine. Tender and sinister, Bozic's art takes visual cues from Sam Flores and H.R. Giger, displaying the human form in a way that's anatomically precise, yet hazy and darkly emotive—not to mention less phallic. Tiffany was recently featured in San Francisco gallery Upper Playground's sweeping graffiti documentary, *Dithers*, and she has now pulled together three years of her work to produce *Lines*—her maiden book of paintings, sketches and photographs.

**XLR8R: What is your artistic background?**  
**Tiffany Bozic:** I've been drawing since I was four years old. My brother and sister are both very talented, and I stole a lot of ideas and techniques from them at a very young age. We would sit around a table and draw pictures of each other. But unlike them, I continued doing art as I got older. When I reached high school, I never paid attention to anything, so I just drew and drew. Then I got a scholarship to art school in Columbus, Ohio, but I didn't like it at all. So I decided to regroup and move to San Francisco for a new experience. As it turns out, San Francisco is a better art school.

**XLR8R: Your work resembles the art of fellow SF transplants Sam Flores and Paul Urich.**  
**TB:** I'm super-excited about the art coming out of San Francisco right now, although I don't necessarily identify with it. The things that I'm discussing to myself, for myself...I'm never thinking about anyone else's work. There are definitely similarities, though, because Paul and I are friends and we support each other a lot. So as a result of our friendship, we get excited about a similar state of mind. But as far as technique goes, I believe I'm doing my own thing.





**MY ART IS HEAVILY BASED ON EMOTION. A LOT OF IT COMES FROM THINGS THAT I DON'T THINK ARE BEAUTIFUL ABOUT MYSELF, BUT I TRY TO PULL BEAUTY THROUGH IT SO I CAN FIND PEACE.**



**XLR8R:** How much influence does skateboarding and graffiti have over your art?

**TB:** I grew up with skaters and around the culture. It represented a feeling that was lacking in Ohio—freedom, individuality, rebellion. My art is heavily based on emotion. A lot of it comes from things that I don't think are beautiful about myself, but I try to pull beauty through it so I can find peace.

**XLR8R:** What kind of themes and ideas pass through your work as a result of being a woman?

**TB:** I can only have this standpoint because I am a woman. Yet I try to dislocate myself from my gender so I can be more compassionate. I focus on the shit everyone goes through as a human being, and how difficult and beautiful it can be.

**XLR8R:** How many years does *Lines* encompass?

**TB:** Around three years—I don't pump 'em out. Most of the work in *Lines* took a really long time to complete. Other times, I can't even sleep—the ideas pour out of me so fast, I have no concept of time because my work takes complete control over me.

**XLR8R:** Is music a motivator for you?

**TB:** Absolutely. I don't think I would be painting if it weren't for music. As I've grown older, I've empathized more and more with music. When you're little and you hear Nina Simone for the first time, you like the way it sounds, but you have no idea what she's talking about. But then when you get older and go through heartbreak, music *really* begins to soak into you.

**XLR8R:** Do you ever get painter's block?

**TB:** I have it right now. [Laughs] But it's stupid, because it's only when I think of other artists. If I weren't thinking about them, the million ideas inside my head would come out much more easily.

**XLR8R:** Do you agree that an artist has to have a troubled mind in order to produce good work?

**TB:** I've been through a lot of drama, so maybe if I hadn't been through that, I might not be doing this. Some people go to therapy to cleanse themselves, some people do drugs. I happen to do art.

*Lines is out now, published by Skullz Press. www.skullzpress.com  
www.tiffanybozic.net*



Digital vs. vinyl? Music, mobility, and video games? Phones, fashion, and film? Selling yourself or selling out? If you're serious about the issues facing the electronic music business, you need to be at the M3 Summit in Miami this March. Four days of networking and two days of thought-provoking seminars and expert-led discussions addressing the industry's future. Add to that exclusive poolside parties showcasing the most sought after new talent and the definitive list of what's happening where and when all week.

THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

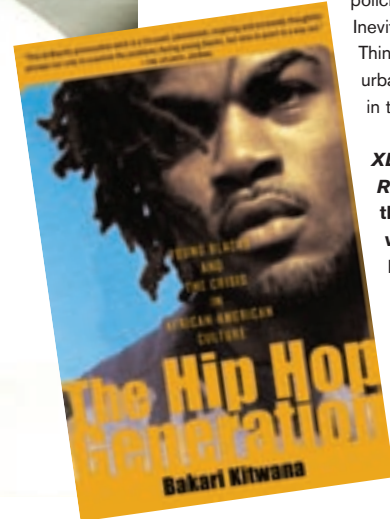
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## TBC HOLLA AT A HIP-HOP SCHOLAR

AS JAMAICAN DUB POETS ONCE PHRASED IT, WORD SOUND IS POWER. AUTHOR BAKARI KITWANA EMBODIES THIS AND REFLECTS ON THE FACE OF HIP-HOP ACTIVISM TODAY. WORDS RACHEL SWAN

Given the changing face of global politics, the divide between the hip-hop generation and its parents seems inevitable: the intentions, forms and language of hip-hop activism distinguish it from the Civil Rights or Black Power movements. In his book, *The Hip-Hop Generation* (Basic Civitas, 2003), Bakari Kitwana situates hip-hop in a lineage of social movements that began with Civil Rights, characterizing the new generation of activists as both an extension, and displacement, of their forerunners. To that effect, Kitwana addresses specific political issues that burden the hip-hop generation, such as corporatism, incarceration and the so-called "drug war" (which he dubs a "race war"). The author reorients the pop culture fascination of hip-hop to larger discussions about race, contending that "the national conversation about race is out of step with the national reality."

As former executive editor of *The Source*, and former editorial director of Third World Press, Kitwana is uniquely equipped to address the concerns of the hip-hop generation, and explain them in a language that is accessible to squares. Kitwana's forthcoming book, *Why White Kids Love Hip-Hop* (Basic Civitas, 2004), will be published in May. He is currently collaborating with other grassroots hip-hop activists—including Davey D, Van Jones, Ras Baraka, Baye Adofo, Rosa Clemente, Chuck D, Boots Riley and Dead Prez—to organize the National Hip-Hop Political Convention, which will be held this June in Newark, New Jersey.

**XLR8R:** What political developments have taken place in hip-hop since the publication of *The Hip-Hop Generation*?

**Bakari Kitwana:** As more young people get involved in activism, hip-hop is transitioning from a cultural to a political movement. Now colleges are having hip-hop weeks and politicians are reaching out to promoters, graffiti artists, spoken-word poets and hip-hop collectives to get young people involved in electoral politics. In fact, politicians are using the power of hip-hop to get people to vote for them. The challenge for hip-hop activists is to channel that power for collective good, rather than someone's personal gain.

More important—and often overlooked—are the organizations that are leading hip-hop activism, such as Black August, the Urban Think Tank Institute, Twenty-First Century Leadership, Let's Get Free and the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement. Once we effect changes in policy, hip-hop will be considered a concrete movement. Right now three billion dollars are spent on hip-hop music globally, and two billion dollars are spent on hip-hop fashion. Corporations are trying to solidify hip-hop as an industry by controlling the wealth and the politics. Hip-hop activists need to re-direct that energy to issues faced by our generation, such as prisons and the living wage. We need to be responsive to the community, rather than the corporations.

**XLR8R:** You suggest in the book that prisons will be dismantled once more white kids get arrested. Do you still have the same analysis?

**BK:** It's clear that even if incarceration was not designed to isolate and neutralize black and Latino youth, it most certainly has had that effect. In fact, prison culture has become synonymous with black youth culture—you don't see paramilitary policing units functioning in suburban or rural communities. Inevitably, young white people are also getting caught up. Things like school shootings, which have been occurring in urban communities since the '70s and '80s, became a crisis in the late-'90s when they hit white, suburban schools.

**XLR8R:** Todd Boyd's *The H.N.I.C.: The Death of Civil Rights and the Reign of Hip-Hop* came out around the same time as *The Hip-Hop Generation*. How would you respond to Boyd's argument that hip-hop is overtaking the Civil Rights movement?

**BK:** Boyd raised an interesting question without thoroughly exploring it. To his credit, the author indicates that many older activists don't understand the political force of grassroots hip-hop, and how it's criticizing corporate interests as a cultural movement. Hip-hop has created an infrastructure that hip-hop as a political movement can tap into. However, as a cultural movement in and of itself, hip-hop shouldn't be compared to Civil Rights.

**XLR8R:** What do you think about the state of hip-hop journalism?

**BK:** Hip-hop journalism has taken a slide in the last four years. *The Source*, *XXL*, and *Vibe* have all backed off political coverage. Mainstream press tends to ignore social commentary in hip-hop, and discuss it as a music and pop culture phenomenon, rather than a lifestyle. Moreover, the mainstream press often wants to pass Russell Simmons as the face of hip-hop activism, when lesser-known people such as Van Jones, Malika Sanders and T.J. Crawford have already been engaging with political issues for a long time. We're conditioned to think of hip-hop as rap, which is why people from the press always ask me about rappers. The artistic and political work becomes secondary.

**XLR8R:** In *The Hip-Hop Generation* you use the terms "black youth" and "hip-hop generation" interchangeably. How have people reacted to that?

**BK:** I wanted to write a book about African Americans growing up after the Civil Rights movement. I could have called it "Incarceration Generation," but I wanted something with more of a positive resonance. Otherwise, nothing could characterize this population better than the term "hip-hop."

People of various ethnicities have tried to claim ownership of hip-hop, but I wanted to unequivocally demonstrate the African American presence in the movement. Too often, we as African Americans don't lay claim to what we do in this country. Of course white people are involved in hip-hop, too: white people control a lot of the PR and marketing in hip-hop, and there's a strong cross-cultural influence in the industry. But there's a strong black and Latino presence on the creative side of hip-hop, in terms of its language and style.

To find out more information about the National Hip-Hop Political Convention, visit [www.hiphopconvention.org](http://www.hiphopconvention.org).

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